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Prologue

"Just a little bit longer." Littlecloud murmured to Tawnypelt. Tension was filled throughout the musky medicine cat den. Tawnypelt groaned and bit down hard on the stick provided for her.

Tawnypelt groaned loudly as she pushed. Out of pain, she clamped down harder on the stick. It snapped in half.

Finally, a small, brown kit was born. Littlecloud sniffed the kit. "It's a tom," Littlecloud breathed, softly licking the kit to life and setting it down gently at Tawnypelt's belly fur.

Littlecloud touched Tawnypelt's belly softly and shook his head, Mudfur looked over Littlecloud's head and watched through narrowed eyes.

"There's still one more to go. Keep breathing and pushing," Littlecloud demanded calmly to the tired queen.

Tawnypelt whined and pushed again. It seemed to be seasons before the small, innocent white kit came into the danger of BloodClan's wrath. The small brown tom mewled and pawed at his mothers' stomach softly. Cinderpelt purred at the tom.

"It's a she-kit," Littlecloud announced, turning to Mudfur. He then turned back to Tawnypelt, smiling softly at her. Littlecloud licked the white she-kit to life and set her down beside her brother. Tawnypelt licked the kits' fur backwards and looked up at Rowansting.

Tawnypelt was breathing heavily. She set her head down and took another glance at her two new kits.

"What will you name them?" Rowansting pushed through the partly crowded den and stood in front of his mate.

Tawnypelt thought for a heartbeat, then spoke. "The tom will be

Deathkit, he'll be stronger then any other cat in the Clan," She finally decided, eyes filled with pride.

"And the she-kit... she will be Icekit, and she'll be as cold and cruel as any cold leaf-bare." Rowansting nuzzled into Tawnypelt's cheek. The new mother nodded, "I want our kits to be strong killers. If they go into the BloodClan Hunger Games, they'll need to be."

Rowansting nodded and nuzzled his mate even more. Purring, he whispered, "They'll be the best, strongest and bravest of them all."

Deathkit gave a small mew and they purred.

Icekit kept quiet, laying by her mothers belly away from Deathkit. They didn't seem to notice Icekit very much, they paid more attention to the slightly bigger kit, purring as he tried to walk over Icekit.

Icekit remained as still and quiet as if she were dead.

***

A/N:

Make sure you read BloodClan Hunger Games since Icefeather's Journey is from it! Thanks for the reads, votes, and feedback!

Allegiances

It will be noted that all leaders in the Clans *before* Scourge took over had kept there leader names.

Plus, Blackfoot never became Blackstar because immediately after the battle, Scourge was pronounced winner.

***

After BloodClan Took Over:

BloodClan:

Leader-

Scourge

Deputy-

Poison

Guards-

Lostface

Brambleclaw

Crowfeather

Blackfoot

Jaggedtooth

Medicine Cats-

Cinderpelt

Littlecloud

Barkface

Mudfur

Warriors-

Loudbelly

Tess

Hoot

Minty

Violet

Ice

Brick *Apprentice*~ Ocean

Longtail

Snake

Sootfur

Rainwhisker *Apprentice*~ Tabby

Brackenfur

Dustpelt

Mistyfoot

Sandstorm

Graystripe

Frostfur

Goldenflower

Cloudtail *Apprentice*~ Birchpaw

Oakfur (Mousefur's mate)

Boulder

Russetfur

Mudclaw

Webfoot

Tornear

Shadepelt

Onewhisker

Runningbrook (Onewhisker's mate)

Rowansting

Thornclaw

Cedarheart

Feathertail

Apprentices-

Ocean

Tabby

Birchpaw

Queens-

Tawnypelt; Icekit and Deathkit

Mousefur; Bloodkit

***

Before BloodClan Took Over:

ThunderClan:

Leader-

Firestar-handsome ginger tom

Apprentice, Bramblepaw

Deputy-

Whitestorm-big white tom

Medicine Cat-

Cinderpelt-dark gray she-cat

Warriors-

Darkstripe-sleek black-and-gray tabby tom

Apprentice, Fernpaw

Longtail-pale tabby tom with dark black stripes

Mousefur-small dusky brown she-cat

Apprentice, Thornpaw

Brackenfur-golden brown tabby tom

Apprentice, Tawnypaw

Dustpelt-dark brown tabby tom

Apprentice, Ashpaw

Sandstorm-pale ginger she-cat

Graystripe-long-haired gray tom

Frostfur-beautiful white she-cat and blue eyes

Goldenflower-pale ginger she-cat

Cloudtail-long-haired white tom

Apprentices-

Lostface-she-cat, white with ginger splotches

Thornpaw-golden brown tabby tom

Fernpaw-pale gray (with darker flecks) she-cat, pale green eyes

Ashpaw-pale gray (with darker flecks) tom, dark blue eyes

Bramblepaw-dark brown tabby tom, amber eyes

Tawnypaw-tortoiseshell she-cat, green eyes

Queens-

Willowpelt-very pale gray she-cat with unusual blue eyes

Elders-

One-eye-pale gray she-cat, the oldest she-cat in ThunderClan; virtually blind and deaf

Smallear-gray tom with very small ears; the oldest tom in ThunderClan

Dappletail-once-pretty tortoiseshell she-cat with a lovely dappled coat

Speckletail-pale tabby

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ShadowClan:

Leader-

Tigerstar-big dark brown tabby tom with unusually long front claws, formerly of ThunderClan

Deputy-

Blackfoot-large white tom with huge jet-black paws, formerly a rogue cat

Medicine Cat-

Runningnose-small gray-and-white tom

Warriors-

Oakfur-small brown tom

Littlecloud-very small tabby tom

Boulder-skinny gray tom, formerly a rogue cat

Russetfur-dark ginger she-cat, formerly a rogue cat

Apprentice, Cedarpaw

Jaggedtooth-huge tabby tom, formerly a rogue cat

Apprentice, Rowanpaw

Queens-

Tallpoppy-long-legged light brown tabby she-cat

***

WindClan:

Leader-

Tallstar-black-and-white tom with a very long tail

Deputy-

Deadfoot-black tom with a twisted paw

Medicine Cat-

Barkface-short-tailed brown tom

Warriors-

Mudclaw-mottled dark brown tom

Webfoot-dark gray tabby tom

Tornear-tabby tom

Tawnyfur-golden brown she-cat

Onewhisker-brown tabby tom

Apprentice, Gorsepaw

Runningbrook-light gray she-cat

Queens-

Ashfoot-gray queen

Morningflower-tortoiseshell queen

Whitetail-small white she-cat

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RiverClan:

Leader-

Leopardstar-unusually spotted golden tabby she-cat

Deputy-

Stonefur-gray tom with battle-scarred ears

Apprentice, Stormpaw

Medicine Cat-

Mudfur-long-haired light brown tom

Warriors-

Blackclaw-smoky black tom

Heavystep-thickset tabby tom

Apprentice, Dawnpaw

Mistyfoot-gray she-cat with blue eyes

Apprentice, Featherpaw

Loudbelly-dark brown tom

Queens-

Mosspelt-tortoiseshell she-cat

***

BloodClan:

Leader-

Scourge-small black tom with one white paw

Deputy-

Bone-massive black-and-white tom

Chapter One - Outcast

It's been two moons since I was born. Tawnypelt hadn't paid much attention to me because she said I was annoying. I was still very small, despite my age, while Deathkit was almost the size of a normal apprentice. Rowansting seemed more satisfied with his progess than mine.

Tawnypelt and Rowansting praised Deathkit for almost everything and it sure wasn't fair in my eyes. I may have been small, but I could do just about everything Deathkit could!

So what if he can jump higher, hit harder and run faster... I can sneak quieter! Isn't that good, too?

But it didn't matter. Whatever I did, Deathkit did it better. Tawnypelt always noticed what he did right and what I did wrong, praising him while she scolded me. It made me feel unwanted, worthless, and weak.

I sat alone at the entrance to the nursery. The ground in the forest was mucky and gross. Today, though, it was sunny out and the mud was drying.

My paws were always muddy when I went to sleep; another thing Tawnypelt hated. Though, Scourge always said if you had dirty paws, you were working and working is living. Even when I cleaned them thoroughly, they still had a dark brown stain. It made it seem like I had brown paws. I didn't like it. I liked being white-and-grey; it made me unique.

Speaking of Scourge, I had heard from the apprentices that there was the best fight when the first BloodClan Hunger Games had happened.

Minnowpaw had tried to escape but was killed by a guard as quick as you could say Dark Forest. Vixontail and Streamclaw worked together to the end - thinking they were the last ones - and had

fought to the death. Stormfur was the winner - Feathertail's brother.

Leopardstar and Tallstar somehow had more lives than a regular Clan cat, and Scourge took them away, all except one, by fighting them. Then he sent them out to the Hunger Games where - since they were the oldest - died first because of starvation.

Dawncloud had died trying to beat a monster and Ferncloud had waited for death to come to her.

That battle was always talked about. *I wonder... Would I be in the BloodClan Hunger Games? Maybe I would show them who's boss and beat the others! Who's small now? Huh?*

Apparently before I was born, we had lived somewhere else and I had missed out on "two great battles". Everyone in BloodClan loved gory fights. I, on the other paw, didn't like battles as much as the others did.

I guess I had missed out on a lot of details before I was born, but I didn't care. I tried not to let myself care.

I had climbed out of the warm nest, the sun climbing over the trees as if it were a happy day. I stood at the entrance to the nursery and watched Scourge, his deputy, and the guards order the warriors around harshly.

"Hurry up! We have prey to catch!" Scourge yelled. He sat on his den - a big boulder with a crack in the middle - with his claws unsheathed and teeth bared.

"Move!" Rowansting hissed. I never liked him. He ignored me and always played with Deathkit when he wasn't working. Which was close to never, so who am I to complain?

Coldkit, Haykit, and Heatherkit tumbled around with Runningbrook watching with her stomach out and her head on her paws, eyes glowing with amusement.

I stalked away from the den and into the muddy clearing. Too many fights over prey happen here and when they do, it ruins the chances of any grass growing in the clearing. It just made me even more

gloomy than I already was every time I woke up.

Luckily, it was sunny so I didn't have to worry about being yelled at.

I stalked around the nursery and lay down beside it. It had brambles sticking out of the top of it so no rain or sun could hit me, plus, there were thickets behind and beside me so no one could get to me. Feeling safer, I put my chin on my paws and sighed.

I always sat there because it was quiet, shaded, and secret. I didn't like being called upon because when they did that, Deathkit would yell something out and everyone would laugh.

Quietly, I sat there watching as the cats in BloodClan got pushed and ordered around. Suddenly, a cat popped up, making me jump in fright.

I stood there, tail trembling and fur hot with embarrassment as I realized it was only Deathkit. Baring my teeth, I let out a snarl to try to intimidate him.

I growled low and clawed weakly at his nose. He barely flinched. "What was that for? Why do you always try to pick on me?" I squealed, fed up of all the picking. I shoved past him and whipped around.

He practically towered over me like the apprentices and warriors did.

"Because it's fun. You're such a kit! Grow up already, you're almost an apprentice!" Deathkit sneered.

"We still have three moons before we're named apprentices!" Narrowing my eyes, I swiped at his nose again. This time it was harder.

Bloodkit padded over and stood beside Deathkit. He was just a tall as Deathkit and just as mean, if not taller and meaner.

He snorted, "Yeah, so? By then you'll still be small, you'll still be afraid of everyone and everything, and you'll still be a puny little

kit. Just grow up you loner." Bloodkit shoved me backwards. Mud smeared my legs and back, making me shiver.

I opened my mouth to speak, but Bloodkit stopped me. "Shut your trap, squeaker," He demanded, shoving his dark brown muzzle into my face, "Or I will." Bloodkit's eyes were completely serious and dark. His breath stank. I could practically *see* his breath billowing from his mouth.

My heart seemed to shatter from the amount of emotional pain I was faced with. I swallowed, looking to my paws.

"She's such a loner."

"Wow, what a pipsqueak!"

"Grow up, will you?"

"You sound more like a newborn kit everyday! What a squeaker!"

The memories of the day after day mockery was terrible. *I wish I was never born at all. Maybe then I wouldn't make others so miserable.*

I always thought Bloodkit was handsome and charming but I knew he would never think about me like that. He name-called me every moment of the day that he could. *What do I say? Or do I not say anything? Maybe I should fight them?*

I sniffed and looked up, but the two were already gone. Tawnypelt came out of the den and rolled her eyes at me.

"Icekit, get over it and stop moping around. They were only teasing." She glared at me. *What kind of mother treats a kit like that? Or is it just tough love? Is there even love in her heart when she looks at me?*

I wanted to argue that teasing hurt just as much as anything, but I chose not to. If I did I knew I would have mad consequences.

"Alright," I whispered, curling up in my safe-spot again. I rested my chin on my paws and watched the day go by.

Chapter Two - Secrets

I woke up in the spot I was in before; the sun wasn't up enough to call it daytime, though. I stood up and stretched until I felt relieved. I shook out my pelt and cleaned my fur up. Dried mud had clumped up my fur and stained my back and legs. Sighing, I continued to clean it until I was satisfied. No one else was up but me.

The crickets and frogs had stopped their singing. The ground was covered with the morning dew from last night. I began to shiver as a cool breeze blew my stained, white pelt. All of a sudden, Scourge was up and on his den. He looked down on me with narrowed eyes.

"And what are you doing out here, Icekit?" He growled, bringing his head down for him to look at me closer. He was a small, sleek, black tom. A very sneaky one, to be particular.

"I er... fell asleep beside the nursery and woke up because it was so cold," I murmured to Scourge, keeping my gaze down as I shuffled my paws. He may have been small, but his claws and teeth could rip me apart in mere heartbeats.

He nodded. "Right. Since no one else is up, you will come with me to look at the territory." My ears went straight up and my heart started thumping hard.

"Before Bloodkit and Deathkit? Is this a joke?" I gasped and he purred, jumping down beside me. *Scourge? Purring? This must be a dream.*

"No, I am serious, Icekit. Come on," Scourge padded out of the camp and I tagged along. We left the camp in silence, passing by the two guards who kept watch during the night. I was amazed at how much territory there was that I didn't know of.

We were in the forest, just beside a land of pines. Prey scattered away as we shuffled along the territory we homed to. *BloodClan has so much territory it is unbelievable!* I bounced around, hopping in

front of Scourge. "So, why'd you choose me to come here?" I puffed as I hopped around, checking things out.

"I was just as small as you when I was a kit. Not many cats believe in you, that you can succeed in what I expect you to, which was how I used to be treated," Scourge explained, his eyes forward. We halted just at the edge of the pine territory. "I was once named Tiny and my two littermates teased me and pushed me around just as much as Bloodkit and Deathkit do to you. They got everything - Twolegs and love - while I got close to nothing.

"Eventually, I ran away and found myself homed to the alleyways in Twolegplace. I had pretended to be a dog-killer and got myself dog teeth to decorate my collar. And after moons of that, I became the most known cat in all of Twolegplace. I was a liar and a killer, you know." He finished, his eyes gleaming bright with pride.

I was so shocked at how Scourge was called names by his littermates. *We have so much in common!*

"I want to be just like you, Scourge!" I squeaked, rushing after him. He was heading off through the pine territory. "The only thing that's different is that you're black and I'm white!" I purred and he smirked, looking over at me.

Deathkit and Bloodkit wouldn't believe Scourges' past! I bet everyone will love me when I tell them Scourge and I are alike!

Just as the sun was fully coming up, we came back to camp. I had caught a mouse - Scourge had showed me how - and he had caught a dove and a vole.

"Can I tell the others I was out training with you?" I whispered and Scourge shook his head.

"You'll be strong without anyone knowing. Let them tease you; things will turn out." He bowed his head to me, taking my mouse, and entered the camp without me.

I felt lonely as he left me and weak again as he took my mouse. *How can I just let them make fun of me? I should tell them Scourge took*

me out! But they wouldn't believe me... And if I do that then Scourge will be angry and not train me...

So I decided not to tell them as Scourge had ordered.

With confidence, I entered the camp again. I began to pad into the nursery when Deathkit and Bloodkit came running out. They shoved by me, making me stumble and fall.

"Oops!" Deathkit sneered, his whiskers twitching in amusement.

"Watch out, pipsqueak, you might get run over by a mouse!" Bloodkit retorted, pushing me back down as I began to stand up.

I felt a growl beginning to slip up my throat. "When I'm an apprentice, I'll beat you two by myself! Watch out because I'll kill you-" I was interrupted by Tawnypelt who nudged me harshly.

"Icekit." She snarled, "Do not threaten your littermates. Get into the nursery and don't come back out!"

I felt a surge of confidence run through my veins and I growled right on back, "That's where I was going anyway before these two greasy mouse-brains came out and ran all over me!"

Tawnypelt glared at me and I hissed at her, running into the nursery.

This isn't fair! Why can't they treat me right? Why does Tawnypelt stick up for Deathkit and not me? Is there something wrong with me? I picked apart the nest I used to sleep in and made one at the edge of the den.

"I'll go out and get prey for myself when Tawnypelt is sleeping or sunning..." I sighed, curling up in my new, small nest.

***

I woke up to cheerful mews in the den. Blinking my eyes open, I looked around. Deathkit and Bloodkit were tumbling around, play fighting. They had their claws unsheathed, freely slashing at each other. No one seemed to care that they were tearing each other

apart. Rolling my eyes, I thought, *Who* would *care? Their jerks.*

I groaned and got up, arching my back in a long, refreshing stretch. They didn't seem to notice I was up and I tried to keep it that way.

Stalking out of the den, I kept my tail just off the ground and my ears flat to my head. I rushed out of the entrance and over to the fresh-kill pile. Before I could get to it, a cat stopped me. *Great, what now?* I thought, looking up to see Frostfur. "Aren't you a bit *young* to be trying fresh-kill?" She asked, narrowing her brilliant blue eyes.

I shrugged, moving past her. "I haven't eaten in at least two days. Tawnypelt *insists* Deathkit eats before me." I rolled my eyes, then muttered to myself, "And then he never let's me have any."

"Well, alright. Come share with me then." Frostfur mewed, grabbing a mouse and nudging me along.

I trekked along to a tree that lined the edge of our camp. I sat down when Frostfur did, her white fur a bit knotted and her tail fluffed out. She looked paranoid. *Is everyone always alarmed?* I wondered, studying her blue eyes. "Dig in." Frostfur nodded to the mouse and I gladly did.

After almost choking a few times, I ate half of the mouse Frostfur provided for me. The mouse was more than enough. It was juicy, still warm, and fat. It was delicious and I found myself wanting more, even though I knew I couldn't fit any more in my stomach.

"Can I have some more?" I licked my lips and glanced up at Frostfur hopefully.

"No, Icekit, you'll learn that you get one fresh-kill per day. There are many other mouths to feed and you cannot only feed yourself." She explained softly.

I dipped my head and fluffed out my fur. "Alright." I mewed, getting up and padding away.

I bet Deathkit and Bloodkit haven't had any real fresh-kill before! Who's bigger and badder now?

Chapter Three - First for Everything

I rushed into the nursery, pride beaming from my face. Deathkit and Bloodkit didn't look up from their fight, seemingly uninteresting in what I had to say. "Hey! Guess what I did that neither of you have done!" I boasted, hopping around.

Deathkit pinned Bloodkit but didn't acknowledge I was there. "Hey!" I yelled and they finally looked up. Annoyance filled their gaze.

I glared at them with a smirk on my face. "Guess who had fresh-kill today and you didn't?" I spat in a challenging tone, raising my chin.

"Not you, that's for sure!" Deathkit retorted, shoving into me. I stumbled a bit, but I unsheathed my claws and held my ground. Deathkit narrowed his eyes and full blown pushed me into the nursery wall.

"Screw off." I snarled. The two toms didn't look frightened in anyway. Bloodkit padded over and circled me, smirking. He retorted, "You must have *dreamed* you had fresh-kill. Newborns like you, pipsqueak, can't handle fresh-kill!" I stood up and narrowed my eyes.

"Even ask Frostfur! She gave me a whole mouse and I ate the *whole* thing in one big gulp!" I exclaimed, shoving Bloodkit to the ground. Bloodkit scrambled up, trying to cover up that he fell, and let out a growl. He unsheathing his claws, ready for a fight.

"Don't you *ever* push me again you mouse-brained fox-lover!" Bloodkit screeched, pure rage flooding into his amber eyes. I tried to hide the fear that I felt by smirking. My tail trembled a bit as he charged at me and I swerved to the side. *Thank StarClan for Scourge...* I thought just as Bloodkit grabbed me and we tumbled to the other side of the nursery.

Bloodkit raise his unsheathed paw and I cringed. My instinct made me start beating on his stomach. Bloodkit yowled as my claws sunk into his stomach. I squealed as he lashed out at me, hitting my face and chest hard.

My face stung and I could see my muzzle welling up with blood. I used all my strength to shove him off. Standing up, I put a paw onto my muzzle to dab the wound.

"What's going on in here?" Tawnypelt yelled, stomping into the den. *Great, now I'm going to get punished for it!* "Icekit pushed me so I pushed her back and she hit the den wall and then she started hitting me!" Bloodkit lied quickly, looking up at her innocently. He limped slowly over to her.

"You are such a liar! That's not what happened at all!" I gasped loudly, taking a daring step forward.

"Oh, *I'm* a liar now? No *you* are!" Bloodkit gasped and Deathkit nodded. "Enough! Icekit I do *not* want to see this happen again. Get out and go see Cinderpelt." Tawnypelt exclaimed, shooing me out of the nursery harshly.

I stumbled out of the nursery, tail trailing in the muddy clearing as I stalked away, my ears flat to my head. I felt so betrayed. *Wasn't my mother suppose to punish both of us? Even if Bloodkit was Mousefur's problem, shouldn't she tell Bloodkit off too? Why don't I have a say in anything?*

I sighed and stepped into the medicine den, the four medicine cats were talking and sorting through herbs.

"Tawnypelt sent me here." I mumbled to no one in particular.

Cinderpelt turned around, her severely injured leg propped up. "Oh! Icekit, I didn't even know you were here!" Cinderpelt purred but when I didn't purr back, she seemed to regret saying it, an awkward silence following after.

"Why'd she send you here?" Littlecloud finally asked and I looked up. "I would've expected Bloodkit or Deathkit to come in wounded.

I heard the fight in there, but I didn't expect you to come in at all." I shrugged and he held under my jaw with his paw.

"It's nothing bad; I don't think it's deep enough for an infection." Cinderpelt murmured to Littlecloud. Mudfur padded over and narrowed his eyes.

"Hm, I'll get some cobweb for that." He mumbled, turning around to get it.

Mudfur came back with cobwebs and he dabbed them onto my muzzle. "This will stop the bleeding," He informed me. *Honestly I couldn't care less.*

I sighed and he took the cobwebs back. "I think you'd be best to stay in here, to be honest. Tawnypelt has changed a lot from when we lived in the forest and when she's mad..." Cinderpelt trailed off and Barkface continued for her. His voice came from the back of the den. "Let's just leave it at: Icekit, you're going to spend the night in the medicine den because Tawnypelt needs some time to herself." Barkface muttered and I narrowed my eyes.

"'Time to herself'? But what about Deathkit? She couldn't last a day without that stupid furball." I growled, padding to the nearest nest. Cinderpelt purred but no one said anything.

Settling down, I curled up in a nest and fell asleep.

Chapter Four - Defence

I must have fallen asleep too early because I woke up at midnight. No one else was awake and soon found I felt lonelier than ever. The sky was black with twinkling stars dotting everywhere.

Standing up, I stretched and began padding into the middle of the camp and thought, *Maybe I should wake up Scourge? Did he forget he was going to train me?* I ended up not going to get him, instead I just walked around the camp. I looked to the sky and watched the dark clouds drift over the moon, the shining stars of StarClan shining brightly above.

I thought about what it'd be like if BloodClan had lost and the Clans had stayed four. *What were their names? ThunderClan, BreezeClan, WaterClan and ShadowClan? No, DarkClan?* No one talked about the old Clans. Scourge hated it with a passion.

Would I be here if the Clans had won against BloodClan? I bet I'd be in BreezeClan; I like to run. I heard Deathkit say they were always running around in a moor catching rabbits. I would rather be in an open space, too. I bet my name would Whitekit or maybe Snowkit.

I jumped as someone cleared their throat. I must have jumped ten tail-lengths in the air. I whipped around, expecting to see Deathkit and Bloodkit, but instead it was only Scourge. I was so relieved he hadn't forgot about training me. It was the only thing I hoped for.

"What are you going to train me now, Scourge?" I gasped, hopping up and down. He purred and led the way without replying right away. *Barely anyone hears Scourge purr! I must be* super *lucky!*

"Come with me, I will teach you how to defend yourself."

I padded out of camp with the BloodClan leader at my side, a cool chill running down my spine, making the fur along it stand up. The stars sparkled like beautiful, white eyes in the black sky. The moon was up and I realized it was half of a full moon.

We trekked silently until we came to a clearing in the forest. Scourge stood back. "Alright, I'm going to come at you with sheathed claws. Be prepared for the worst." Scourge announced, backing away.

My heart pounded as fast as a rabbit and my eyes darted from one of Scourge's icy blue eyes to the other. Feeling suddenly like I was being preyed on, I began to panic.

In a way, I was.

Scourge leaped at me and before I had time to do anything, he landed just beside me with a loud - yet swift - thump. *That would've killed me!* Pushing the thought to the back of my thoughts, I swallowed. I didn't want to be in a fight with him, I was sure of that!

"I want you to *move*. Watch me for signals that I'm going to use before I jump, like my tail might twitch or my ear," Scourge explained and I nodded.

I shook out my pelt and waited. Suddenly I felt panicky again and I didn't know if I was going to be able to pay attention enough to see the signals. Watching his ears and then his tail, I took a few deep breaths to prepare myself. I didn't see any signal as he leaped at me.

Scrambling backwards, I tried to get out of the way but Scourge must have guessed I would because he landed right beside me again. My eyes widened as I realized how sharp his claws were. *The ground was torn up where he had landed. I would hate to be any real opponent.*

"Try again." Scourge mewed and I dipped my head.

We tried this several times but I just couldn't get the hang of it. I only once seen his ear twitch slightly but I still couldn't move out of the way quick enough.

"That's alright, you're still a kit. But when you're an apprentice, I won't be so easy on you. Your mentor, I mean, won't. I hope anyway." Scourge dipped his head to me then nudged me along to a

tree.

"Here, use your claw to get the moss off the tree. This gets your paw use to the technique of nice slices with your claws." Scourge explained and I nodded.

"Watch me do it," He unsheathed his long, sharp claws again and began to demonstrate. He tore off a perfect slice of moss with just a slight movement of his paw. "You try."

I raised my paw and unsheathed my claws. "Like this?" I cocked my head to the side, putting my claws under the moss and flicking my claw toward me. Bark from under the moss hit my face. Sadly, it scared me and made me flinch.

Scourge shook his head, sighing, "No, no. Watch." I watched him do it a few more times before I tried it again.

***

By the time I had made a small pile of clean moss, the sun was just starting to come up. Scourge stretched and fluffed out his black fur. "I think that's enough for one night, don't you?"

I nodded, yawning. "I could sleep for five moons I'm so tired..." Standing up, I shook out each leg to get them awake.

"Woah, woah now. This moss isn't going to just go to waste." He growled and I cringed.

"Sorry!"

He started to pad off and I swallowed. "Um, Scourge," I trembled and he looked over his shoulder. "How do I bring this back? I don't think I can hold all of it in my mouth."

"Yes you can. Ball it up and put it in your mouth and under your chin," Scourge explained quietly, sitting down to watch me. I didn't reply, just did as he said.

With a bit of his help, I managed to make the moss into two balls. I padded off with one under my chin and one in my mouth.

"Now, get some rest." Scourge bowed his head to me and hurried off alongside me.

***

A quarter-moon went by and each and every night Scourge taught me how to hunt and fight. We would practice until the sun began to come up the sky. It took my mind off of the abuse I went through every time I went back to the camp. Nothing had really changed, other than my skill to hunt and fight. My sassy attitude was still the same, but I found a sudden urge to fight anyone I could.

Bloodkit still called me names, Deathkit still teased me and pushed me around, Scourge still taught me things, and I was still ignored by Rowansting and Tawnypelt.

I, for one, hadn't of grown at all. Bloodkit and Deathkit were almost the same size of an average apprentice and I was still as small as a newborn kit. Not really, by then I was a touch taller then a newborn kit. I was teased by almost everyone because of it.

Cinderpelt had no idea why I hadn't grown. She suspected it was lack of nutrients or something like that, but I assumed I was just naturally small. And I hated it! I dreaded every moment of going back to the camp. I just wanted to be left alone.

Bloodkit and Deathkit were in the nursery, just waking up and doing their usual cycle of fighting, then eating, then fighting, and then playing mossball. They were currently on their second fight. I decided to eat with Frostfur like every other day. Tawnypelt found out about it and wouldn't let me have milk any longer. I personally couldn't care less, fresh-kill was way better anyway.

I was yanked out of my thoughts when something jumped onto me. "Get off!" I squealed but a second thing jumped onto me. "Think you're so strong now, huh?" Deathkit growled, pinning me down on my stomach.

Not now, come on! I thought and just like that, a fight broke out.

Chapter Five - The Forbidden Prophecy

I flipped onto my back. *I am almost old enough to be an apprentice and I will not be treated like this anymore!* I thought, but just as I did flip over, he clawed at my face.

"Stop!" I demanded but Deathkit kept going. Luckily, his claws weren't all that sharp. Bloodkit just kept guard, making sure no one was coming. Kicking and biting, I tried to defend myself.

"You're such a liar, a weakling! You would *never* make it through the Hunger Games! Not even a day!" Deathkit spat at me. I snapped at his muzzle but he shot his head back. Clawing at his eyes, he sliced back at me.

Suddenly, Deathkit slashed my cheek and my face swung to the side. "Screw off Deathkit!" A mewl came from the nest over one. It was Coldkit, one of Runningbrook's kits. Haykit and Heatherkit were his littermates.

"Weren't you supposed to be guarding, Bloodkit?" Deathkit snapped. Bloodkit only shrugged.

My brother faced the small kit. "Don't tell me what to do." Deathkit hissed, lashing his fluffy tail. I took my chance and kicked him off of me. He fell right onto Bloodkit.

I dipped my head to Coldkit and tore away, tripping over my own paws. I halted and skidded in the mud, running into Rowansting.

Scrambling away, I felt all eyes on me. I could feel his eyes burning into my back as I bolted away. Being distracted and unaware, I headed for the camp entrance.

Bloodkit and Deathkit ran after me, but before I could get tackled, I was out of camp. I didn't stop there, even though Bloodkit and

Deathkit did. I rushed away, pelting as fast as I could into the unknown forest. I headed upward, around two hills, and few trees. Pelting onward, my legs began to fail and cramp up. I headed to the lake, turning toward a hill. I stopped running and just trotted.

I came to the lake and saw a stream in between two high hills. I trotted up it, surprised at how good I could run already. *I'm a natural BreezeClan warrior!* I smirked and kept to the streams edge, watching the water swirl by quietly.

Following the stream upward, I came to a small pool. An image flashed into my mind of paw prints that weren't actually there. It was as if someone was telling me that there was supposed to be a trail of paw prints up to here.

Looking into it's shimmering, cool-looking water, it seemed to look endless. It made my mouth water so I reached down to take a few laps at it.

I didn't even taste it, I instantly fell asleep.

***

I woke up in a gloomy, windy field. I stood up from the grassy field I was laying in, and I stalked through it. *Where am I?* I pondered, heading forward. I took random steps, eyes narrowed to a slit and my heart pounding.

Was that water poisoned? Am I dead? I gasped and full blown ran through the field. *I'm dead!*

"Hello?" I yowled to no one in particular. I rushed through the field, the long grass whipping my face and legs. Being too short, I had to hop around to see above the long grass. "Is anyone here? Where am I?" I called out, but no one seemed to be around. No one answered my calls.

I halted at the top of a hill, looking down on the view as if I were a leader looking down on my Clan. Up there, the grass was slicked down, waving in the warm breeze. The smell of heather and greenleaf made me feel welcomed, but not one cat came out to

welcome me.

"Hello?" I called once again. A head popped out of a cave. More came out of other hiding spots and I suddenly felt outnumbered and innocent.

The cats started murmuring to each other and they then casually trotted toward me. They didn't look like normal cats with their glittering pelts and faded bodies. Stardust was swirling around their paws and their scent made me dizzy, smelling of stone and water.

"Wh-who are you?" I stammered, backing away with my pelt raised in hostility.

An unfamiliar blue she-cat came up first, then a flaming orange cat. A fluffy, white cat with bright yellow eyes came to stand and a grey tom, too.

A black and white tom showed up, about the size of an apprentice. A she-cat with brindle fur came too. Another grey she-cat with a flat face and anger in her eyes came; I was frightened by her. *She looks like she could be a great fighter!*

A brown, sleek tom came with a crooked jaw. *He must have been a medicine cat with a jaw like that!* A tortoiseshell she-cat came with bright green eyes. She looked like a queen, a sweet one who loved kits and helping people.

A backed away as a huge, golden cat came, his fur as fluffy as a lions' mane. *He should've been named Lionclaw or Lionfur, he could've been a strong warrior, maybe even a leader!* A light brown cat came, his fur sleek as if he swam a lot. He almost looked the same as the crooked-jawed cat.

A black and white tom with a long tail came, his eyes dark amber. *He should be named Longtail!* And finally, another tortoiseshell came, this time a tom, with a red tail. *He should've been named Redtail!*

"Who are you?" I whispered, my eyes darting from one cat to another.

"I am Bluestar, once the leader of ThunderClan." The blue she-cat

replied, her head high. The flaming orange cat with bright green eyes came next, dipping his head kindly.

"I'm Firestar, once leader of ThunderClan as well." He gave me a kind smile. Then the flat-faced she-cat came. "I am Yellowfang, once the medicine cat of ThunderClan and ShadowClan." The crooked-jawed cat stepped forward. "My name is Crookedstar, once leader of RiverClan."

The black and white tom with the very long tail spoke next, "I was once the leader of WindClan, I am Tallstar." I nodded to them.

"I thought you would be a medicine cat, Crookedstar, with your injury and Yellowfang, you look like a scary warrior..." I whispered, suddenly confused. My tail flicked back and forth and my whiskers trembled in curiosity.

The loving she-cat stepped in front of me. "The rest of us are from the Clans as well, but it doesn't matter. This is StarClan. We never thought we would see another live cat again." The tortoiseshell she-cat with brilliant golden eyes sighed. "Are you a queen?" I asked, tilting my head to the side and ignoring what she said.

Yellowfangs' tail twitched and Bluestar nudged her. "She's only a kit." She growled and Yellowfang sized me up, "A newborn kit, for that matter." My ears went flat to my head. Opening my mouth to let out a retort, I unsheathed my claws just as the kind she-cat interrupted me.

"Anyway," The tortoiseshell she-cat cleared her throat, glaring at Yellowfang.

She turned back to me, "I was once a medicine cat actually. But please listen to me, Icekit." Warning edged her tone and I perked my ears up and listened attentively.

I nodded and swallowed back the many questions that I wanted to ask so badly. I began shuffling my feet, wanting to badly to speak.

"BloodClan was never meant to take over the four Clans, ThunderClan, RiverClan, WindClan and ShadowClan," She began.

Her tone made my fur prick up in fear. *So that's the names of the four Clans!*

"Yet, Ice will grow around the territories with the Feather at it's feet. Blood will be no more, they will suffer their defeat."

Chapter Six - Visions

I woke up at the pool, my mind a daze and my legs trembling.

Ice will grow around the territories with the Feather at it's feet. Blood will be no more, they will suffer their defeat. The eerie sentence that the beautiful medicine cat had told me rung in my head. *What did she mean?* It was killing me that the old ThunderClan medicine cat hadn't told me what it meant.

By now, the sun was almost down. I started trotting back to camp on wobbly legs. An image flashed in my mind of a group of cats, purring with each other. They were on their way to the moor.

No one purred while on their way to the moor, that's where they get sent to The Hunger Games. That's when nine out of ten don't come back. It was always quiet, depressing, and scary as you headed to the moor, I was told.

I blinked and the vision was gone. *StarClan is sending me messages! Were they from the Clans?* I wondered, rushing away toward camp.

I came to the camp and before I went in, another image flashed and I saw a totally different camp. It wasn't muddy; it had dents in the grass from walking but it was more of a clearing then a mud-spot. It was clean and happy-looking. The brambles around the camp weren't dead and there were no thorns surrounding it. It was as if it were new and more alive.

I trekked into the camp and my eyes widened. The fiery orange cat I saw in my dream - Firestar I recalled him as - was chatting up a storm with Sandstorm, and Sandstorm was actually *happy*. She was never happy anymore. She was grouchy, snappy, and sassy.

I spotted a brown she-cat dragging her hind legs behind her. A grey tabby tom padded out of the medicine den, and as he got closer to leave the camp, I noticed he was blind, his eyes wide and blue. His eyes seemed to never end, just like the pool I had found. A reddish

tom purred with a creamy tom without a tail. Lostface was laying down with Cloudtail, eating prey with him.

She also looked happy and less serious and emotionless. *Who are these cats?* I wondered, padding in more.

A light grey she-cat padded out of camp with another grey tabby she-cat. "Icecloud!" The reddish tom called to a white warrior.

She whipped around and I gasped. *She looks exactly like me!*

I rushed over to Icecloud but before I could get over to her, I was zapped back into reality.

The muddy campground was depressing. A lump of emotion got caught in my throat and I fought to swallow it down. I wanted to live like the original Clans, where they were happy and not constantly looking over their shoulder and hostile. It seemed better for me, and Icecloud seemed like she was who I was supposed to be.

Though I didn't spot Tawnypelt, maybe I wasn't suppose to be Icecloud? I felt a sudden spark in my heart but I chose ignored it.

I realized quickly that cats were giving me looks. Scourge padded over, his eyes narrowed to a slit. "You look like you ate too much catmint! Where were you and what in Dark Forests' name were you looking at that made your eyes so big and hopeful?" He hissed. I would say he was towering over me, but he was barely the size of a growing apprentice.

"I ran out just to get out-" I mewed quickly. He couldn't know I was talking to StarClan, I'd be killed! I could've said I went out for a walk to cool off and to get away from Bloodkit and Deathkit? It wasn't *exactly* a lie. It just didn't have all the story to it.

Scourge sized me up with narrowed eyes. "You *cannot* run out of this camp again. *Ever*." He sneered, interrupting me. I nodded eagerly, my eyes wide with fear. Scourge nudged me away towards the nursery. *Looks like I won't be going anywhere anytime soon...* I thought as I was shoved into the nursery. "And where were you?" Tawnypelt growled, sitting up. Deathkit was fast asleep.

"Trying to get away from *him*," I replied with a snarl. I slouched down and narrowed my eyes. "I couldn't care less about that." Tawnypelt hissed, whipping me around "I asked you where you were, not why you left." I rolled my eyes inwardly and let out a deep breath.

"I don't know where I was, just in the forest territory," I mumbled, stalking away to my small nest. "And what are you doing?" Tawnypelt growled. I could almost picture her clenching her jaw in fury.

"Am I not aloud to sleep or something? Why are you asking so many questions?" I growled, curling up in my nest anyway. I heard Tawnypelt stand and she padded over to me. She smacked me with all her might and I squealed.

"Don't ever speak to me that way again!" She hissed and I stood up.

"I'll treat you how you treat me!" I yowled and turned around so she couldn't see me. Furious, I refused to look my mother in the eye. I muttered in a mocking voice, "Icekit? Who's that? Deathkit is so much better!" Tawnypelt hit me again and I rolled out of my nest, dizzy and paralyzed from shock.

After I mustered up the courage to take off, I ran out of the nursery and stayed in the clearing. Panting, I backed into my little spot and sat there by myself. *If anything, she won't hit me out in the open...* I hoped, gazing up at the dimming sky. I watched the moon slowly slide up the sky. The sky went from light blue to pitch black in what seemed to be like mere heartbeats. I didn't realize how long I was out there until I noticed the stars were shining. They twinkled like the StarClan cats' stardust. *Is StarClan watching me? Are they trying to help me become a great warrior?* I wondered, examining the sky as the stars danced.

I felt a presence come up in front of me and I shot my head to look at who was there. It was Coldkit. He had his head popped out from beside the nursery, curiousity flooding his big, bold eyes.

"Coldkit? What are you doing up?" I mewed and he shrugged, responding, "I couldn't stay asleep and I thought it would be the

best to come outside. Turns out you are out here, too." Coldkit's voice was squeaky and I knew it was because he was young. Still, he sounded like a she-kit. I had to swallow my purr down so I didn't embarrass him.

I decided to just nod. I wasn't sure how I was supposed to reply to that his answer.

Silence curled around my ears and made me feel uncomfortable and squirmy. Finally, Coldkit spoke again, "Where do you think we go when we die?" Coldkit whispered. I looked over at him.

"StarClan," I answered quietly. Coldkit tilted his tiny head in confusion. *Of course he doesn't know about StarClan. What kit would?* I sighed. "It's where the good cats go, Dark Forest is where the evil ones go." I explained and he nodded.

"I knew about the Dark Forest. I have never heard of StarClan." Coldkit mewed and I put my tail to his mouth, "Sh!" I hissed, "You cannot speak of StarClan. Scourge doesn't like it."

Coldkit nodded several times and I dipped my head. "Explain to me about everything you know about StarClan!" He pleaded. Looking around the campground, I bowed my head to him as I realized everyone was asleep. "Alright, don't tell anyone about this." I ordered and he again nodded. Quickly, I told him everything I knew about StarClan: what they had told me and who they were. I told him about the images I had seen when I came into camp and how I wished it was like that now. I put in every detail I could remember, making sure he could see what I had seen.

Little Coldkit gave me a look of confusion as I went on but I could tell he took it in and was processing what I had explained. "Wow," Was all he could manage to get out. I dipped my head and looked away.

"You don't believe me, do you?" I murmured, avoiding eye contact.

"Hm, I'm not sure if I do. You sound crazy! But I'll try to take in what you said!" He purred, a flash of sympathy sparking in his eyes. Coldkit stood up and fluffed out his fur, hopping away. "I'm going to

sleep, I'm tired. Bye!" He bounced away, disappearing into the nursery.

I still wasn't tired. I didn't even have the guts to leave the spot I sat in to go into the nursery. As cold as I was just sitting there, I knew Scourge would eventually wake to train me.

Chapter Seven - Rogues

I was woken by a sudden jab in my side. I jolted awake, realizing I had fallen asleep. Scourge was towering over me, even though he was almost the size of an apprentice. I scrambled to my feet, dizzy because my body had just woken up. I knew it wouldn't take that long to wake up fully with the cold breeze lifting my fur and making me shiver.

"Hurry, I slept in as well as you, we might not get a lot of training in today." Scourge warned, trotting away.

Feeling rushed, I hurried in after him. "What am I going to learn today, Scourge?" We padded farther and farther away from camp. I felt uncontrollably energetic as the wind blew us forward.

"I will teach you how to defend yourself more." He murmured. Scourge was obviously distracted by something, his tail whipping from side to side, his ears twitching and straining to listen.

"What is it?" I asked, tilting my head, "Why are you so distracted? Is there someone here that you don't like?" Scourge didn't reply right away.

I didn't want to bug him, but it was killing me that he wasn't answering. "Scourge?" As I spoke, Scourge halted. *Oh no! He's mad, he's going to kill me!* I thought but just as I cringed to be ready for a devastatingly hard blow, he got down in a stalking position and hissed, "Get down!"

Getting down, I couldn't help but feel my stomach churn in fear about getting caught; I had barely any experience with stalking! "Keep quiet. It must be a group of rogues," Scourge warned, eyes narrowed to a slit.

He stalked forward quickly and quietly. I followed him even though I knew that I wouldn't even be able to harm an enemy nor stay quiet for as long as him. Scourge halted at the edge of the forest,

hiding in behind a thick tree.

I peeked over with wide eyes. My heart lurched at the sight of a large group of muscular, scarred rogues. "Who are they?" I gasped but Scourge hushed me with a whip of his tail, hitting me on the nose.

"Quiet!" Scourge snapped. Shrinking down more, I obeyed his command.

There were at least seven cats, each large with muscle. I couldn't even tell if some were she-cats or toms!

One was taller than the others, his slick, knotted light brown fur clung to him, revealing his bones and several scars. The others must have had dark pelts because I couldn't tell the color of their pelts in the darkness. My eyes darted from the group to Scourge a few times in suspicion. *What's he going to? Is he going to take them all on or run off to get the camp?* I swallowed back the questions. He had to concentrate.

"Come with me," Scourge growled, rushing off quietly. Peeking over my shoulder as we dashed away silently, I noticed not one of them had noticed we were there. I ran in beside him, pounding through the dark forest, until we came back to camp. Puffing, we slowed down in the camp.

Scourge's icy blue eyes were cold, serious, and very angry. "Wake up!" Scourge yowled and almost instantly, cats poked their heads out of their dens. Poison came out before anyone else, trekking through the mud. His dark pelt was matted.

"What is it?" Poison asked, his ears twitching and his eyes narrowed. I could tell he was still groggy from sleep. "Seven rogues have been spotted on our territory and we need to act quickly, killing them." Scourge explained.

"What were you doing with Icekit?" Poison growled, glancing down at me. "She ended up following me out. I hadn't of noticed she was there until I finally spotted the group of rogues." Scourge lied.

"No!" I protested, shaking my head dramatically. Scourge glared down at me and I got the hint. He didn't want anyone to know. *Is he ashamed?* I wondered, scanning his face for signs of shame or regret. Scourges' face was unreadable!

Poison finally nodded in understanding and I sighed. Before Scourge could reply to Poison or call out to anyone else, I prodded his black leg.

"Scourge," I whispered, trying to be quiet. Other cats were murmuring, so I didn't think Poison would hear. "Am I going to fight, too? Will you train me double time tomorrow night?" Scourge lowered his head to me and he stared into my eyes deeply.

He did it for so long, I started to feel uncomfortable and I cringed as his icy, cold, blue eyes bore into my soul. I decided to say it again, just in case he didn't hear me. "Am I going-"

"No, you're too young and you don't know enough about fighting. I'm not sure if I can do it double but I will train you if there isn't anything happening tomorrow." Scourge growled, lifting his head away from me. "Poison, grab the strongest cats here. Make sure there are at least five of them that you choose. Maybe six." Scourge ordered, his whiskers twitching slightly.

Poison dipped his head and padded off. I watched as the six cats Poison chose padded in behind the deputy as he approached Scourge again. Jaggedtooth, Rowansting, Thornclaw, Russetfur, Sandstorm and Mistyfoot were there, eyes glossy with fatigue.

"Icekit, go get some sleep." Scourge ordered as he led the way out and I sat down with a huff. Rowansting nuzzled Tawnypelt in farewell and set off. My ear twitched in anger but I didn't move.

The group had left a while ago now and all the cats had left to go back to sleep. I knew I couldn't fall asleep now, not when a battle was happening. I had to witness it. I wouldn't be able to sleep unless I saw the battle!

I looked around the muddy, gloomy camp. No one was out and awake for all I knew. I pelted away, following the way Scourge and

I had gone. The darkness loomed around me and flashes of cats surrounded me, all unknown. I knew some of the faces for sure, from BloodClan and some from StarClan. I knew it was another vision of what the forests were suppose to be.

It faded just as I fell into a bush, tripping over thorns and squeaking. I yanked my pelt free and fluffed out my pelt, thorns refusing to leave. *I don't have time for this! I have to go see the fight!* I thought to myself as I limped toward the sudden sound of fighting.

I hurried along, rushing toward the sound of fighting. I was gaining on them! I stopped at a tree and I peered out from behind it, watching Scourge bat around a cat. They were faster then BloodClan warriors, dodging the large claws of our warriors.

I narrowed my eyes, scanning the cats. The light brown rogue was dodging Scourges' every move like a snake. I itched to run in and attack the light brown warrior; I would be great! I decided that was that, I was going to help!

Scourge will be so proud!

Chapter Eight - Tougher Than Ice

I dug my claws into the ground and wriggled my flank, my tail swaying in the air. I studied Poison as he pinned one of the rogues down and slashed his neck. *They still need my help...* I took a deep breath, and charged into battle.

I stumbled under Mistyfoots' paws and leaped at the warrior she was trying to beat back. "Icekit? What in Dark Forest's name are you doing here?" She hissed, shoving the muscular cat back. This time, I could actually make out its pelt, a dark blue pelt with bright yellow eyes. I assumed it was a she-cat, even with all the muscle.

"I came over here because I noticed you guys were- were having trouble." I replied. I got interrupted and had to repeat myself as I reached for the dark blue cats' eyes. I couldn't get to them because I was so small. I backed up and leaped onto the she-cats back. I was surprised and excited at how high I could jump!

Deathkit won't believe this! I thought with a wide smile. The dark blue cat suddenly shook out her fur and I held on with my claws. I dug in as good as I could until I was ripped away. Mistyfoot pinned her down while she was distracted and gave her the killing bite.

She glared over at me and stomped toward me. "See! I helped, didn't I?" I chirped, hopping up and down. The gray she-cat didn't reply, just jumped into battle to help out Sandstorm. The rogues were now out-numbered, yet they still doubled onto Sandstorm?

I jumped into the air as a huge paw stepped on my tail. I clawed at the leg and hissed, backing away from the rogue.

I watched Scourge smash a cat in the face with his claws, blood splattering to the side as his face was forced to the left. Shock flooded the rogues' eyes as he stumbled to the left. I realized it was a black cat with brown stripes and blue eyes with blood dripping

from the gash on his jawline. Scourge held his ground and as the cat leaped at him he lifted his claws and cut a perfectly straight line down his stomach. Blood poured from the wound and refused to stop, even when the cat held his paw to it. Scourge smirked and the rogues backed away from the BloodClan warrior's.

"Retreat!" One called and they filed away, dragging the dead and assisting the majorly injured.

Scourge pointed to the rogues with his tail and Poison, Thornclaw and Russetfur pelted toward them. Scourge watched them go until you couldn't see them any longer. Scourge turned to me.

Anger and pride were mixed in his icy blue eyes. "I don't know if I should be proud of you or angry at you." He growled, eyes narrowed. "I couldn't stay back and just wait! I'm not welcome in the nursery anyway; I wanted to help!" I pleaded but he only stared blankly.

I swallowed as he stared. Finally, he spoke again. "You are welcome anywhere. Just because your littermates dislike you, doesn't mean you can't go places. One day you'll be strong enough to beat them until they bleed out. They'll fear you. The ones who get bullied become the greatest known. I would know." Scourge responded in a growl and I blinked, shocked at how meaningful his words were.

Scourge padded away, not a scratch or anything on his black pelt. He was unbeatable! No one could ever beat Scourge. With his long dog claws, studded collar and icy, heartless blue eyes, anyone who threatened him stood no chance against the ultimate warrior of all times.

I may have wanted the loving, happy life as a real Clan cat - how it was supposed to be - but Scourge had been an amazing cat in my eyes. I didn't know what I would've done without him.

***

I was forced to go to sleep before the sun came up. My stomach growled for milk but Tawnypelt had officially given up on me, not allowing me to have any.

I woke up with my stomach rumbling for something to eat. Bloodkit was excited today. He was four moons now, which means he's going to be an apprentice. I envied him greatly. Deathkit, on the other paw, was happy for his friend. He considered him his brother and I was considered the outcast.

I padded out of the nursery. Only one good thing came out of Bloodkit becoming Bloodpaw and that was: no more two on one fights. *Unless... He comes at me with Deathkit. Would he help out Deathkit before he was made an apprentice?I hope not.*

I sat at the fresh-kill pile, no more than two mice and a thrush. I loved mice, so I picked the bigger one and carried it to the spot beside the nursery. I sat down and watched as Minty and Hoot shared tongues, purring together and keeping their heads close together.

I knew they would be mates eventually, that's if they weren't already. I savoured the taste of the mouse and chewed gracefully. The sun was already up, almost fully. I swallowed the last bits of my mouse and fluffed out my fur. Licking my lips, I cleaned up my white fur. I made sure I lapped at the cuts, too, as they were slowly becoming pink scars.

I looked up to see Scourge talking to Poison, Ice and Brick. Scourges' eyes were hard and serious, occasionally nodding. Their heads were close together and I wanted to desperately to know what they were saying.

I chose not to sneak up on them and listen - as much as I itched to - and just cleaned up my fur. Scourge dipped his head in farewell and padded up to his den where he must do his announcements.

I stayed where I was as he called everyone forward. They apprentices and warriors gathered. I was focusing so much on how Minty and Hoot nuzzled each other that I hadn't of noticed Bloodkit was already touching noses with his new mentor, Tess.

I didn't want to listen, but Scourge would want me to. *I wonder when I'm going to be an apprentice? What will my warrior name be? Will Bloodpaw, Deathkit and I be forced into the BloodClan Hunger*

Games? I wondered, narrowing my eyes at the deputy and leader of BloodClan. *I bet Scourge wouldn't do that to me. When will Scourge die? Probably never!*

I came back into reality when low cheers rippled among the Clan. My tail whipped in anger. "Bloodpaw! Bloodpaw!" The Clan cheered. *Would they be louder in the original four Clans? Would Mousefur even be alive? I bet not, she's pretty old as is.* A growl crept up my throat at how excited and proud Bloodpaw was, his chest puffed out. Mousefur licked in between his ears and he ducked down. He hissed something at her and Mousefur purred.

I sighed. I wished *my* mother was like that. She would've just walked away to Rowansting and then cheered on Deathkit. Just to be mean to me and to make it clear she hates me.

The cheers lowered to murmurs and Bloodpaw spoke for a bit with Deathkit until Tess ordered him to come with her. *I hope Bloodpaw gets what he should've a long time ago: discipline.*

Chapter Nine - Losing and Gaining

Scourge padded down from his den and dipped his head to Poison. Poison looked mad as if he wanted to confront him but Scourge kept walking.

I fought my instinct to go follow him. I felt like I should be following him everywhere, as if I were his apprentice. He was one of the only ones who cared about me.

I stood up and wearily padded out of my hiding spot. Haykit, Heatherkit and Coldkit were tumbling around each other. Coldkit jumped back from the two others and turned around. I met eyes with him and he hopped over. "Wanna play?" Coldkit mewed and before I could nod, Heatherkit and Haykit stood on both sides of Coldkit. Coldkit gave them looks like he didn't know why they were there and then his face lighted up. He opened his mouth to say something but Heatherkit hushed him by speaking up.

"No, she can't play with us. She's almost three moons older than us and she's *still* smaller. I don't want to kit to play with us!" Heatherkit hissed and Haykit narrowed his eyes and nodded.

"I can beat you at fighting anyday!" I yowled, unsheathing my claws.

"Try me." Heatherkit growled and Haykit and Coldkit backed away, sitting off to the side. I even seen Deathkit in the corner of my eye and he too sat off to the side.

I scratched at the ground and gave Heatherkit a glare. I bared my teeth at her and she did it back, unsheathing her small claws. I gave a brief look to mine and noticed they were obviously bigger. I smirked and dodged away from her as she leaped at me.

Instinct came to mind and I clawed at her face as she went to hit

me. She staggered to the side and my heart thumped fast in success. Blood welled up on her face and I hissed at her. Heatherkit did it right on back to me. She leaped at me and I backed away. She landed in front of me and clawed at me. I was only able to dodge one hit and I came back with a big slash onto her eye.

"Enough." Scourge hissed, separating me from Heatherkit. I gave her a snarl, my teeth bared, and let Scourge push me back. Onewhisker only shrugged as if he hadn't of known what was going on. *I bet they all thought I was going to get beaten. That's why no one stopped us.* I thought, glaring at the cats that had surrounded us.

Scourge sent Heatherkit and her two littermates into the nursery. Runningbrook scolded them but not harshly. Tawnypelt stretched at the entrance and yawned, "Are Deathkit and Icekit fighting again?" She acted as if it was okay.

"No. This time it was Heatherkit and Icekit." Scourge growled. "I love to see a good fight once in a while, but kits? No. It *is* amusing and I am not soft hearted, but Icekit needs to learn that fighting other kits has to wait until when she's an apprentice." Scourge looked down at me and gave me a look.

"It wasn't my fault! Heatherkit was taunting me and I sick of it!" I complained, then muttered only just loud enough for others to hear, "Tawnypelt couldn't care less if I got killed anyway." Scourge shot me a glare but didn't reply. Tawnypelt stomped toward me and opened her mouth to say something, but Scourge pushed her back. She sat down by the force of how hard Scourge had pushed her.

"Leave her alone, she has been through enough as is." Scourge growled. "And you -" He turned to me, "you need to stop getting into fights or I'll give you a fight you'll never forget." Scourge warned.

I dipped my head and fought the urge to gulp. I didn't know what to say. I knew he would tell me not to get into fights, but as his blue eyes bore into mine, I felt like he didn't like me any longer. I didn't want to think that way, though. What if he did still like me and I tried to stay away from him? He'd probably move on and make me an apprentice even later than I wanted.

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Bloodpaw padded into camp as the sky darkened. I had literally done nothing but sit around and watch the sky brighten and then darken.

I realized as Bloodpaw brought in a pigeon and a bloody, cut up face. He didn't look like he was in pain, just pride glowed in his gaze. I realized I hadn't eaten in what seemed to be forever and my stomach was rumbling. My eyes fastened on his cut up face as he padded toward Deathkit to boast. He had already dropped his pigeon and was puffing out his chest and explaining what he had learned.

Bloodpaw never seemed to be looking for love and even now as I had been watching him from my hiding spot, I noticed he rolled his eyes every time Ocean and Tabby tried to speak to him. *Too strong and cool for them, I suppose?* I thought with a snort. That ball of fur couldn't beat a blind dog that is deaf and missing a leg!

I could beat that boastful, ugly ball of fur in a fight any day! But should I try fighting him? Scourge, Poison and Thornclaw went out a while ago, for reasons no one but them knew. Thornclaw was insane! *Would they kill him or strengthen him up? I bet he's going to be one of the next contestant for BloodClan's Hunger Games.*

I stood up and fluffed out my white fur. The breeze was chilly for new-leaf air. Bloodkit had complained that the snow went away *way* too early, just before Deathkit and I were born. Apparently not even a quarter-moon before! I, on the other paw, wasn't complaining. It was cold and unwelcoming here as is!

Coldkit padded out of the nursery and gave me a brief look. He turned away without even saying hello. *What's his problem?* I thought, stalking up to him. I opened my mouth to say hello and to ask why he never greeted me, but just as I did, Heatherkit and Haykit smashed into me and made me roll away.

"Hey!" I squeaked and Heatherkit gave me a look that said, *Touch him and I'll kill you!* I'd rather not get into trouble. Scourge would be on his way by now. Coldkit barely looked my way as I slowly stood

back up.

Scourge suddenly padded into camp, bringing Thornclaw, Poison and four strange, bloody cats with them. Glares and shocked looks went their way. Scourge didn't stop to say hello or anything to me, but I could understand because he had stuff to do.

Thornclaw was bloodier than ever, limping. He disappeared into the medicine den and cheery greets floated into the cool air. The medicine cats were always happy about something.

Scourges' voice rose above the greetings of the medicine cats. His voice was a low growl, his claws unsheathed and chin high. "These four rogues have asked to stay. Burn, Snipe, Snapper and Timber are their names. I say we make them... prove they're welcome. We've had two kits fight for the past quarter-moon; now it's time to have a *real* fight occur."

Chapter Ten - Jerks Everywhere

What in StarClans' name is that *supposed to mean?* I almost gasped. *I think my fighting is great! Especially for an unwelcome, outcast, tiny kit like me!*

I wasn't sure at all who was who. One cat was a light brown tabby with black paws and ears. Another was black with grey front paws and huge fangs. They were so huge, part of them stuck out of his mouth! Another was a huge muscular brown cat. His eyes were a dark purple. He looked like he ate kits! And the final one, not as tall as the others, had light grey fur and tall ears.

"First ones, Burn and Lostface." Scourge ordered. The light brown tabby stepped forward and Lostface took her place.

"What happened to your face?" Burn hissed, his eyes wide. His green eyes sized up the ginger and white torn up she-cat. "Same thing that'll happen to yours!" Lostface hissed, leaping at Burn. Burn gasped but didn't move in time.

She landed on his shoulders and pierced deep in side of his back. Burn cringed but recovered greatly by bucking her off. I glanced at Scourge who was leaning in, his eyes hungry for a fight. "This isn't fair! We're already injured by Scourge and the other two!" Burn called out as Lostface chased him in circles.

Lostface cut through the circle and slammed into the tabby. I saw Cloudtail leaning in to the fight, his eyes hopeful. *Does he like the fight as much as Scourge, or does he like Lostface? Maybe he likes Burn? Thats's stupid! Lostface doesn't love anyone or anything. And I bet neither does Burn. Especially a guy...* I tipped my head to the side and sighed.

The fight didn't last long as Burn was practically torn to pieces on his face - just like Lostface had promised.

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Snipe, Snapper and Timber also went. Timber had crushed Sootfur and made him stumble with every hit. Snipe wasn't too bad for a small cat, doing just about as well as Burn. Snapper had bitten so hard down on Hoot that Hoot had to see the medicine cats about his tail. It was kinked and dripping with blood as he rushed to the den.

Of course, the medicine cats were more than happy to see another patient to visit. *They have four of each other. Are they that tired of themselves that they pray to have a severe injury just so they can see the cats?* I noticed that the only reason they were aloud outside of their dens were to get more herbs and to fetch fresh-kill. *I should visit them more often... They seem tired and lonely. Plus they're the only ones who actually seem excited to see me...*

Scourge announced that the four rogues could stay in camp and that they were welcome in the Clan. They had to train tomorrow though, just to get them stronger.

I fluffed out my fur and looked around. The sky was cloudy and dark. I could tell rain was coming.

I felt bored out of my mind... *Nothing to do... I'm not aloud to fight, nor leave camp. Scourge is too busy and I'd hate to be a bother. Would Frostfur or Coldkit play with me?*

I padded toward the nursery and entered it. I tensed up as I saw Deathkit and Bloodpaw tearing apart my nest with pure hatred and excitement glowing in their evil gazes. *Why can't you two accept who I am?* I almost yowled out. My pelt prickled and spiked up. I wanted to claw their ears off right then and there!

"Speak of the freak..." Deathkit murmured. I could see the smirks spreading among their devilish faces. "Hey Pipsqueak! We remodeled your nest," Bloodpaw teased, flicking his tail slowly. *Is he trying to get me to jump at him and kill him?* I narrowed my eyes to a slit.

Anger began to bubble up inside of me. I was so eager to just... beat them up. I knew Bloodpaw would probably know more then me by now... But hey? I could still cut him up and maybe make him wish

he hadn't called me that name. I was so sure he had forgotten about it. He hadn't called me that name in days.

Before I could lose my temper anymore, it seemed Scourge had beat me to it. He seemed to have enough today with cats arguing, and it seemed with the sudden amount of cats appearing in our territory that he was more agitated than ever.

I backed out as quick as my legs would take me and halted as I saw yet another newcomer. Three, actually.

"Finally. I was told the Clans - er, Clan - was beyond the mountains. I decided to give up Tigerstar's kits. They've been dying to live with him." A brown she-cat mewed. She was obviously nervous. Who wouldn't be?

Scourge gritted his teeth. "Tigerstar?" He hissed. His eyes flashed with annoyance. The she-cat only blinked, puzzled.

"Answer me when I talk to you!" Scourge exclaimed, taking a step forward. Poison took a place on the right side of the black leader. "Yes. He-he is the father of these two, Hawk and Moth." She stammered.

Scourge let out a purr, his eyes flashing with pure evil. "I remember those furballs. Good runners, you are. Where's the other one? The black one?"

The she-cat swallowed and looked down at her two remaining kits. "None of your business!" The small brown tabby tom yowled, fur spiked up with his icy blue eyes round.

"Just like Tigerstar, aren't you?" Scourge growled. He stomped up to the tabby and just barely hovered over the tom who seemed to be Hawk. *Soon, Hawk would probably be just as tall as Scourge...*

"What do you want me to do with them? I don't want *any* part of Tigerstar, or his kin." Scourge hissed. Moth just sat still, eyes hard and serious. Hawk was clawing at the muddy ground.

"I thought they should stay in the Clans, but now that I know what the new Clan is like, I'd rather not let them stay." The she-cat

growled. Her blue eyes were a narrow slit. Scourge flicked his tail and Poison and Brick dashed in behind her, blocking her way out.

Do they know what he wants simply by the flick of his tail? I'll have to ask him about that as soon as I can!

"No, no. I change my mind," Scourge announced simply, looking away slightly for dramatic affects, his eyes effortlessly open. "I'll take them." He growled, looking toward the three strangers with only his cold eyes.

"I thought I said I changed my mind? Whose kits are these? *Mine*!" The brown she-cat exclaimed and Scourge snorted. "Whose territory are you invading? Mine." Scourge gave her a dark glare.

"I won't let them go without a fight. I change my mind; I shouldn't have come here." The brown cat pleaded, backing away with her kits close by. Poison shoved her forward. "A fight? I've been through over five today. Come at me, *kittypet*." Scourge unsheathed his long dog claws and bared his sharp, yellow teeth.

"It's about to go *down!*" Coldkit hissed to Heatherkit from the entrance to the nursery. "Hush!" Runningbrook scolded and Coldkit gave a small apology.

Coldkit is right. One way or another, Scourge will have those kits.

Chapter Eleven - Blood Spill

The stranger she-cat swallowed. Her eyes were darting from glare to glare. *I'd hate to be in her paws right now! She has no idea what's coming for her.*

Brick lightly pushed the two kits away from their mother and the she-cat started breathing heavily. She swallowed as fear flickered in her darkening gaze. *She should've known something was up. Does no one talk about the tragedies in the Clans?* "Well?" Scourge purred, "Come at me."

"Sasha!" Hawk called. I expected fear to be in his icy blue eyes, but instead, excitement was flooding them. "Beat the dirt out of him!" Hawk yowled, teeth bared. His little tail lashed from side to side eagerly.

The she-cat - apparently Sasha - gulped and turned her gaze to Scourge. Scourge didn't look to intimidated as Sasha bared her teeth. He was more... *amused*. I could practically hear Sasha's thoughts: "Walk away without my kits, but with my life, or kill myself for the respect of my kits?"

Sasha suddenly leaped at the small BloodClan leader, but Scourge easily dodged her claws. Sasha was for-sure a kittypet and Scourge was the leader of the Clan that killed without regret or without thought at all. Who would win? I was sure it would be Scourge. My ear twitched as I watched the battle begin.

Everyone knew what Sasha was in for, and nothing good about it was coming to mind.

Scourge skidded to the side. His eyes narrowed in concentration, his claws extracted, and his yellowed teeth showed as a smirk spread across his evil face. Sasha leaped again, claws unsheathed and eyes round. It all seemed to happen in slow motion.

Hawk leaned forward out of anxiousness, grinning, while Moth

tried to hide her anticipation. Sasha flew toward the small leader. Scourge raised his one white paw and dove forward. As quick as his muscles would go, he shot his paw upward, right into the soft belly of the kittypet.

Sasha landed on the ground just behind Scourge. Snapper and Timber gasped in shock while Hawk gulped. A thick, dark liquid poured from the she-cats stomach. She gasped - as if only now realizing what had happened - and put a paw onto her leaking stomach.

My jaw dropped. "This is why my Clan is called BloodClan. We spill the blood of our enemies like we do to our prey." Scourge hissed.

Sasha looked over at the small cat, eyes rounder than an owls' in bewilderment. Blood started to drip from her jaws and just like that, she collapsed. "Sasha!" Moth gasped, rushing over to her mothers side. "Your kits are BloodClan warriors now. Rest in peace you waste of air," Scourge muttered near Sashas' ear.

"Close your mouth before a fly goes in it!" Frostfur mumbed as she prodded me with her leg. I did as she said and swallowed. The blood of Sasha still seeped from the wound but she no longer moved.

"Poison, Brick, get rid of her body. We're having a ceremony for these two." Scourge called to the two cats and flicked his tail to the shocked kits. Brick was always called to do duties, just like she was a deputy. She was probably older than Scourge, too... Which I didn't quiet understand. Scourge must've known her before he created his bloodthirsty Clan.

I'll have to ask him about that. I decided. "What do we do now?" I whispered to Frostfur. She leaned in, keeping her eyes forward. "I'm not sure. Take a nap maybe? I have to go on patrol as soon as the ceremony is done." Frostfur suggested. It was so odd, how we just shrugged off the death of those who are weaker than us. As if they didn't even matter. Our eyes followed Scourge to the den he always announced on.

"Hawk, Moth, step forward. I am keeping your names how they are,

since I'm not fond of the Clan names. Hawk your mentor-" Scourge began, only to be curtly interrupted. "Woah! My name, my choice. I'd like to be Hawkpaw, and maybe Hawkstar like my father!" Hawk raised his chin. "Moth can have Mothpaw as well and maybe Mothwing when she becomes a warrior!"

Hawk puffed out his chest and Moth only rolled her eyes, not speaking. *I bet she has trouble speaking... Or is she just naturally quiet? I bet she can't speak because Hawk does so much talking, she can't get a word out.*

"Do *not* interrupt me," Scourge growled, teeth clenched in fury. "I am your leader and you *will* respect me with all you have. Last warning, Hawk." Scourge warned as he glared down at the tabby. Hawk rolled his eyes and opened his mouth to say something smart but Moth saved him by flicking his ear with her tail tip. She gave him a nasty glare to warn him.

"Did you not see what they did to Sasha? One more smart move like that and you're the next bleeding mess!" She spat and my ears straightened. There was obvious pain in her golden, young gaze, but she hid it well as she growled at her brother. "So she *can* talk?" I whispered to Frostfur. Frostfur nodded with a purr.

Scourge seemed pleased by Moth's words. "Listen to your sister. She seems to be well over double times smarter than you," Scourge muttered. "Hawk, your new name is Hawkpaw. Ice will be your mentor. If you give him attitude you will be straightened out. Moth, your new name is Mothpaw. Thornclaw will be your mentor. He may be quite the oddity, but he is fierce and will be a great teacher." Scourge announced. Hawkpaw and Mothpaw touched noses gently with their new mentors.

"Cloudtail, Brick, Rainwhisker, Tess, Thornclaw, and Ice. Bring your apprentices out for training." Scourge ordered. The six mentors dipped their heads and grabbed Ocean, Birchpaw, Tabby, Bloodpaw, Hawkpaw, and Mothpaw.

Bloodpaw seemed more then happy to talk to Hawkpaw. They had two things in common: they were both total mouse-brains and they were both incredibly rude. If they weren't into she-cats, they'd be a

perfect match.

I sighed and watched them all head out. I longed to go out there, to run and fight. My paws itched to feel the grass tickle my stomach as I dashed through an endless field. And best of all, if I fought anyone, I wouldn't get in trouble for it.

Brick must have already brought out the dead body of Sasha because Poison was back as well. Brick had already gone by then, though.

"Frostfur, take Mudclaw, Violet and Hoot for a hunt. Lostface, take Mistyfoot, Minty and Graystripe for a border patrol near the river. Hunt, too. Brackenfur take Goldenflower and Russetfur out to hunt." Scourge instructed and they all nodded. Gathering up, they left in a hurry. Without even noticing, all of them padded through the blood of Sasha. Chills were sent down my spine out of an empty horror.

I wish I could go on patrols... I hate being cooped up in here! I watched my only friend trot off with her patrol. Many cats were still in camp, but I felt lonelier than ever.

Scourge was talking to Poison, Jaggedtooth, and Brambleclaw. "And Crowfeather and Dustpelt, take Burn, Snapper, Snipe and Timber out to show them around. Give them a few lessons while you're at it," Scourge added.

I had to ask him those questions, I couldn't take it anymore. The curiosity for those answers were killing me... I padded up to Scourge. Just as I neared the black tom, he nodded to Poison. Poison and the two guards padded off to speak to someone else. Scourge looked down to me and sighed, "What, Icekit?"

"How do Poison and Brick know what to do when you only flick your tail?" I mewed and tilted my head to the side.

"They... just know. It's our secret, no one but us three knows," Scourge replied without a second thought. He seemed to be thinking of something else, his eyes distant.

"Have you known Brick for a long time?"

Scourge nodded, "Her and a dead friend of ours, Bone, were my first allies."

That explains a lot! "Oh! And last question: when do I become an apprentice? I hate being cooped up in this stinky camp!" I complained, frowning.

Scourge narrowed his eyes and gave me an annoyed look. "Half a moon." I nodded. Though he didn't seem to put much thought into his answer, I took it seriously anyways. Scourge never lied about anything. *Half a moon isn't that long from now! I guess I can wait!*

Chapter Twelve - Becoming a Killer

A quarter moon went by with nothing exciting going on. The apprentices would leave in the morning, including the four newcomers, and would come back with at least one wound. I was more than jealous. *Way* more than jealous. And the envy grew like maggots in the dead everytime they came back with another battle wound.

I tried not to let it get to me. Soon, I'd be an apprentice.

And soon, I had just realized, was the BloodClan Hunger Games. We had to wait six moons before the next battle, and two more moons and it would be up. Scourge seemed very happy to announce it was coming up.

"BloodClan Hunger Games is in just less than two moons! Be prepared, and please... Don't fight our decisions!" Scourge had warned, his eyes were narrowed to a slit and flooding with excitement and evil.

Scourge looked older now. His muzzle dotted with white and his fur clung to his body shape. It was always on my mind about when he would be dying.

I was snapped out of it as my name was mentioned.

Scourge was on top of his den again, his eyes dark and mysterious. He fluffed out his shiny black coat and looked straight at me. I hadn't even of noticed he had called the Clan together.

"Icekit, step forward." Scourge announced. My eyes widened and reluctantly, I stalked forward, my fur fluffed up in alarm. I left the nursery's opening and stood under Scourge.

"From this day forward, until you have been given your warrior

name, you'll be named Icepaw. Mudclaw will be your mentor, may his strength and determination help you become a cold blooded killer." Scourge announced, flicking his torn ear. His eyes were narrowed and I turned around as I heard paws coming toward me.

Mudclaw touched noses with me, his eyes dark and evil, "When I'm done with you, kit, you'll wish you were never born." He snarled into my ear.

A shiver ran down my back and I blinked in shock, not even listening to the ceremony of Deathkit as he became Deathpaw.

Deathpaw could barely keep his paws still; Hawkpaw and Bloodpaw were practically jumping up and down in excitement for Deathpaw.

Tawnypelt looked happy and my heart skipped a beat as she even met eyes with me and gave me a small nod. Her green eyes were bright with pride. Rowansting was on patrol, but I couldn't help myself but hope that he also would give me a small nod, or something similar to say he was proud.

BloodClan cheered our new names until Scourge raise his tail for silence. "Thornclaw, take Tess, Ice, Mudclaw, Sootfur and your apprentices out to fight." Scourge instructed. He dipped his head and we left.

I hopped out of the camp with excitement pulsing through my veins. I looked above to see the sky was covered with dark, bulging clouds. Rain was for sure coming and I didn't even care.

Nothing was going to ruin this moment.

We headed toward the torn up training center, where blood had stained the sandy grounds. My heart sped up and my eyes widened as I realized what I was *really* getting into.

"To some, welcome to the training center. To others, welcome back." Tess grunted.

"This is where you'll be fighting Clanmates to semi-practice for the Hunger Games and to keep BloodClan safe and protected. Only the best apprentices are chosen to be warriors, others are forced to

prove their strength by going to the Hunger Games," Ice announced, his voice strong and carrying around the silent forest. "Only the strongest in both will-power and force win."

Chapter Thirteen - Compliments

I watched in horror as Bloodpaw and Hawkpaw mauled on each other, leaping at each other and tearing at their pelts as if they were mortal enemies. Mothpaw and Deathpaw took it slightly easier on each other, not hitting as hard.

I was more than glad to be with Mudclaw, aiming at a low branch. He was making me practice jumping for a bit, then after the others were done tearing each other apart, I'd get to try to beat one of them. It took quite a bit to get used to being on my hind legs, but every time I stumbled, Mudclaw would claw me on the shoulder lightly, so I learned quick.

Mudclaw didn't say who I was fighting, but just my luck, it would probably be Bloodpaw.

I leaped and leaped, swinging my short legs at the low hanging branch. All I could get were the dead twigs that stuck off of the tree like quills.

I felt hot with embarrassment as I jumped and missed the thick branch everytime, making me feel small and weak. I felt like everyone was watching me, snickering and whispering about how tiny and pathetic I was.

One day, I vowed inwardly, *mark my words, BloodClan, I'll be the strongest that ever lived!*

"Alright, you're just making a fool of yourself now." Mudclaw muttered, pushing me backwards. "Mothpaw, you'll be Icepaw's opponent. Practice basic fighting moves like these," My mentor ordered. His voice was rough and serious. Too serious, as if we were going into a deadly battle we *had* to win.

I stood up in a rush and waited for further instructions.

Mudclaw and Tess circled each other with unsheathed claws and bared teeth. Tess was a bit more proper, her teeth less stained and her fur not as knotted and thick. Mudclaw, on the other paw, was scarred with matted, brown fur and sharp, stained teeth.

He needed to clean himself, which I made note to tell him the next time I could.

I watched the two warriors circle each other and then Mudclaw pounced, landing in the spot Tess once was. Tess slid behind him and sliced the back of his legs with two neat cuts. Mudclaw flinched only just enough to notice, then twisted around just in time to pin her down.

"Now once you're here, you aim for the neck and you've won." Mudclaw finished, facing the apprentices. He got up and fluffed out his thick fur.

Thornclaw pitched in, his voice low and his ears twitching and scanning for noises. "Icepaw, Mothpaw, you two first. Hawkpaw, Bloodpaw, Deathpaw, you three will be fighting against your mentors while Mudclaw and I watch over these two."

Mudclaw dipped his head in agreement and so did the other mentors.

I swallowed nervously. Mothpaw may be quiet, but she was tough and probably not the kind of she-cat to give mercy. A shiver rippled down my spine as a chilly breeze swept through the training center.

Mothpaw unsheathed her claws and lowered herself into a crouch, her haunches high and eyes wide. I did the same and tried to keep myself lower than her, aiming for the look, speed, and stealth of a snake.

I unsheathed my claws and curled my lip in fake-hatred. We circled each other twice, until Mothpaw lost her patience and dove for me. I froze and forgot what Tess had done and stood there like a sitting duck.

Mothpaw landed on me squarely and we rolled in the muddy,

blood-stained ground. Mothpaw just looked over at her mentor as she pinned me.

"Teach her a lesson, make her wish she had moved quicker!" Thornclaw called. My heart pounded fiercely as I glanced over at my mentor to see he was actually excited to see it. Leaning forward, eyes narrowed, Mudclaw waited.

Mothpaw looked down at me and from her amber gaze, she gave me an apologetic look as she raised her golden paw.

Slash after slash, she hit me over and over in the face. I kicked at her stomach but she barely budged. My eyes stung as blood dripped into them. My face throbbed and I pictured my white face now painted crimson red.

I began to cry out in pain as Mothpaw's claws sliced already open wounds.

"Enough." Thornclaw meowed, standing just beside us. He was a blur now, as well as everything else my eyes could catch. Rolling over, I started to blink the blood out of my eyes until I began to see straight again.

From where I was rolled onto my side, I whipped my face with my paw. I could feel the wounds moving and I flinched in pain. Blood was smeared on my paw when I looked at it.

Mudclaw shoved his narrow, scarred muzzle into my face, snarling, "Try again, but this time I want you to actually fight *back*."

We stayed out there until the sun was already down. We were told the darkness was our friend since it kept us hidden from our enemies. The patrol only went back because we were starting to tire and not fight as well.

I had lost twice to Mothpaw, though I did injure her a few times. I felt satisfied even though Mudclaw didn't seem to be at all. "For your first time fighting, you didn't do all that bad," Deathpaw praised.

Did my ears hear my correctly? Did Deathpaw actually *praise me?* I wondered, giving him a confused look. My heart skipped a beat.

He didn't wait for a reply, he just hurried off to stand by his mentor, Sootfur. He had a small limp as we headed back - as well did I since Mothpaw got me good with the whole slicing-your-ankles thing.

Tawnypelt gave me a nod of pride today, Deathpaw gave me a compliment, and now I have battle scars! Today was a good day, indeed!

Chapter Fourteen - Darkness and Blood

I laid down with Frostfur with a starling in between us. Frostfur's eyes were wide and staring at my scabbed, bloody face. "So... I see you had quite the... experience, huh?" She stammered, eye-balling my face. I swallowed and raised my chin.

My stomach growled and I instantly began to tear at the starling. Through chews, I muttered, "I learned a lot today and I'm proud to have battle scars!"

Frostfur nodded slowly and waited for me to be finished my share to dig in. She chewed slowly in thought. "I assume you had to be taught a lesson to have to be beaten up that badly?" She meowed.

I narrowed my eyes and nodded. "Only because I didn't move quick enough. Now I know if I don't, this will happen again,"

Frostfur shook her head softly and kept silent. "Icepaw! You should go see the medicine cats about your injuries. Wounds or not, you're battle training tomorrow!" Berryfur advised. I stood up immediately and padded over to the medicine den.

"Greetings, Icepaw!" Cinderpelt gasped, turning from her herb piles. *These poor cats do everything to save our Clan and they are forced to stay cooped up in here... I should ask if they want to go out to look for herbs?*

"Hello," I dipped my head to the four cats. They were all elderly and for some reason, happy. "You four need to get an apprentice because you guys are older than ever!" I purred and they all nodded, their whiskers twitching in amusement.

Barkface pushed past Cinderpelt. "No one wants to be us. We're stuck in here with nothing to do... Why would any cat want to be like us?" I shrugged, replying solemly, "You guys don't *have* to stay

here. There's more to the territory then just the campground," They exchanged glances.

"Let's just clean your wounds. You'll have to go to the lake to clean it off, first." Cinderpelt sighed. Her eye sockets were hollow and her fur was unbelievably clean, as if she spent every heartbeat cleaning it.

"How about you guys come with me to the lake? You guys need to stretch your legs and we could search for some herbs while we're at it!" I suggested. Littlecloud and Mudfur shoved the other medicine cats out of the way to see me, all of them looking frail. Their eyes brightened up and they nodded viciously.

"I'll go tell Scourge you're running low on herbs and we'll be out!" I chirped, "Follow me."

I ducked out into the clearing and searched for Scourge. The four medicine cats followed close behind me. I wondered what they looked like in the daylight.

I rushed up to Berryfur since I couldn't find Scourge and told him where we were going. He didn't look impressed but he let us go. Sending Blackfoot and Brambleclaw along with the five of us, we set out.

The two guards were on either side of the patrol, their bodies bulky and pelts thick and well-groomed. Brambleclaw's eyes gleamed in the darkness while Blackfoot's pelt did the gleaming. I led the patrol, feeling older and more mature, I felt like this had been the best day ever.

"I've been having these crazy dreams of darkness and blood, and then I wake up freezing cold. I'm surprised I haven't woken up with ice on my whiskers yet!" Cinderpelt purred. I noticed Brambleclaw and Blackfoot exchanged curious glances, but they didn't say anything. The other medicine cats nodded as if they were having the same dreams.

What does that mean? What a crazy dream. I wondered, narrowing my eyes in thought.

The guards were silently watching me as I washed my blood-soaked face at the lake. It stung as if I were being stung by millions of bees, but I eventually got the blood off.

"Now that we can see your wounds, we'll clean them up. I know where to find marigold and comfrey to help heal it and keep out infection." Barkface informed me without making eye contact.

"No need for cobwebs, the bleeding has stopped on its own." Cinderpelt muttered as she examined my face.

Turning to Brambleclaw and Blackfoot, Cinderpelt asked, "All of our herbs are shriveled up now, could we go out to search for some?" The guards exchanged glances and nodded.

Littlecloud padded over to them with Mudfur on his heels, "We need new bedding as well. We'll go get some." Mudfur meowed.

"Who gave you the right to just walk off? Did we say you could go off without one of us?" Brambleclaw snarled, blocking their paths. "Blackfoot, go with them."

"Give a bit more respect to your medicine cats! We do everything we can to help you and this is the respect we get?" Littlecloud rasped, his ears flat to his skull.

"We don't need you lousy medicine cats. Keep your mouth shut before I brake your jaw off!" Blackfoot hissed, shoving them forward.

I'd hate to be a medicine cat. One day, they'll be sorry they let them die.

Chapter Fifteen - Finding Trouble

We had gotten back by the time the sun was making it's way up to it's highest point. The sky was blue and few clouds whisked across the sky. A calm breeze whispered among the camp as I waited for Mudclaw to come back from his patrol. My tail tip twitched impatiently; it seemed to have a mind of its own.

My gaze traveled over to the medicine den. The medicine cats were a lot happier now that they got out of that cramped and dark den. I wasn't aloud to help them or really even talk to them, and I wasn't sure why.

"Icepaw." Mudclaw's voice came from the entrance to the camp, "Lets go. I'll teach you how to hunt first then we'll meet up with the rest of the apprentices for battle training." I nodded and hopped out of the camp with my mentor on my heels.

"Where are we going, Mudclaw? Is it somewhere I've never been?" I asked, hopping around. Mudclaw's eyes flashed with annoyance and he stomped his foot down on my tail. I yelped in surprise and stopped bouncing.

"No bouncing, Icepaw. This is serious." He growled. *But... it's* hunting*! How is this serious?* I flicked my ear and narrowed my eyes, ready to spit out a retort when he shoved me back with the same paw he trapped my tail with. I toppled over.

"If you're smart, you'll keep your mouth shut." Mudclaw snapped. Hot with embarrassment, I nodded and fell in behind him.

The brown tom was silent for a few heartbeats, but soon he began to explain his plans. "We'll head toward the pines and I'll show you the Main River and the Island Marshland," Mudclaw looked over his shoulder at me briefly, "We'll hunt on the way and check for rogues and foxes."

My heart thumped quick and my tail quivered in excitement. *I'm finally going to train to hunt, and I'm going to see the territory! Maybe I'll even fight off a rogue!*
***
Rain had started to fall by the time we made it to the Main River. We didn't search for prey on the way, we just kept going. But as we neared to the Main River, Mudclaw halted and instructed me to search for a trail that any prey had left. Gladly, I did as I was told.

"No one comes this far back often, so it'll be a bonus for you." Mudclaw called to me as I sniffed out the scent of a thrush. *I heard birds are tricky to catch...* I thought as I spotted the creature behind the bush. I grinned. It had it's back to me, not even noticing my presence.

I stalked towards it and before I could even get close, it fluttered away, calling out in fright.

Mudclaw padded over, his eyes filled with annoyance but he kept his anger to a minimum. "Your tail was too high, and your paws kept scraping the undergrowth. Try again with the next prey you can find." He grunted.

I nodded and fluffed out my fur, raising my head and opening my mouth to taste the air. The rain made it hard, but soon I found myself tracking down a mouse.

The small brown creature was munching on a seed under the shelter of a flower patch, just barely visible. If it weren't for its tail, I feared I would t have seen it at all. Mudclaw pushed my tail down just above the ground and dipped his head for me to go. Eyes narrowed to slits and claws unsheathed, I stalked forward until I was only a tail-length away.

I pounced onto the mouse and gave it the killing bite. Lifting the tiny creature up, I turned and gave my mentor a look of triumph. He bowed his head but didn't praise me. My heart sunk but I forced myself to look bold and careless. *After all, he* did *just bow his head to me. If that's not good enough, then what is?* I optimistically thought to myself.

A battle cry rose through the air and we whipped around. Crows cried out and flew away from the moor. "Something's wrong... Go back to camp, Icepaw, I'll be back." Mudclaw hissed, tearing away after the cry. I watched him bound away and leap over the Main River with one graceful leap. He bolted away toward the moor and I let a growl creep up in my throat.

I wish I could go fight! It sounds like a good battle is coming... I whimpered inwardly, dragging my tail as I headed back to the muddy, cramped camp. The mouse didn't even matter to me anymore.
***
I dropped my vole and mouse into the fresh-kill pile lightly and backed up as another patrol did the same. The fresh-kill pile was for sure growing larger every day.

I had caught the vole on my way back, being unsuccessful with a squirrel as well. "Great catch, Icepaw! First day and you bring two things back." Frostfur praised, her frail shape trotting happily over to me. "You should eat, you don't look so well." I suggested, tilting my head to the side.

"Oh, I'm fine. I'll eat later." She reassured, a raspy purr escaping her. I wanted to push her to eat, but I didn't bother since I knew how stubborn she was.

"Where's Mudclaw?" Sootfur asked me with Ice beside him.

I looked over at the two toms. "While he was teaching me how to hunt, we heard a battle cry from the moor and he took off. I was told to go back to camp while he checked it out." I explained with a shrug. The two toms exchanged nervous glances and hurried off with Mistyfoot, Shadepelt, and Minty on their heels.

"Scourge, Brick, Poison, Onewhisker, Hoot, and Russetfur all went out to the moor early this morning... I wonder what they found." Frostfur murmured to no one in particular.

Chapter Sixteen - The Death of the Great One

I couldn't sleep, my mind was wandering constantly. I couldn't understand why I couldn't turn my thoughts off and just sleep, so I decided to get up and move.

I slithered around the apprentices as they laid still, deep in slumber. I peeked out of the den to see Poison, Ice, Mistyfoot, Brick, and Onewhisker all huddled around a hunched, black body. The fur along my spine stood on end and my eyes widened as I sensed the tension and anger among the warriors.

I strained to hear their conversation, keeping low to the soggy ground.

All was silent for a while until Poison broke it with a low murmur, "We'll have to tell them in the morning and announce the new deputy. He died in his sleep, that's the story. Scourge would never allow to go down in history by a few rogues." Ice began to growl and he clawed the ground in annoyance. "Rogues... they can be help, *and* they can be a nuisance!"

Scourge... is dead? I thought, my mind going blank. I looked away as they dragged the lifeless carcass of the BloodClan leader away and into his den. Onewhisker and Ice didn't follow, Onewhisker just limped into the medicine den, his body showing he was exhausted and in serious pain. I couldn't see the wounds, but by the looks of how he cringed with every step, I assumed they were bad. Ice, on the other paw, went to the warriors den to - I assumed - sleep.

Curiosity crept up on me like an enemy and I soon found myself creeping along the edge of the camp toward Scourge's - now Poison's - den. I halted beside the den and craned my neck toward the entrance to the den and listened as well as I could.

"-grew soft. I'll be the newer, younger, and *better* leader of

BloodClan. Scourge showed too much mercy when it came to rogues and cats in our Clan." Poison snarled. *How could they say such a thing? Scourge was a great leader! He was my first friend, and they are treating him like dirt!*

"I say we tell them the truth. Sooner or later, someone's going to spill it and the Clan will be in a riot." Mistyfoot advised. Her voice was low and meaningful. "I see where you're coming from, but I think it's best we keep Scourge as the leader who couldn't die in battle." I heard Brick meow. She was always calm and reassuring. Though she acted as if I didn't exist, she was a kind cat.

But Mistyfoot wasn't convinced. "Wouldn't it be better to say he died killing, doing what he was best at?"

"What do you think you're doing, sneaking around?" A growl from behind me made me freeze in terror. "Ice! I-I was just going to ask... er... Where- how the battle went!" I stammered, my eyes darting around the camp.

"Wrong answer. Liars aren't welcome in BloodClan." Ice's eyes were cold and empty, his claws slipping out and gleaming in the moonlight. I gulped in fear and cowered into a small, white ball of fur.

"Ice! Back down." Mistyfoot hissed, shoving him back with a harsh shove of her shoulder. Ice stumbled then shoved her back. They hissed at each other and Ice pounced onto her as Poison stalked out of his den, Brick following close behind.

Ice and Mistyfoot tumbled around and Poison just turned to me, completely ignoring the two warriors. Looking directly into my eyes, Poison growled, "You keep your mouth shut about what you heard or I'll force it closed." I nodded in a rush and looked from Brick to Poison, unsure what I was to do.

"Well? What are you waiting for? Go to your den and stay there until the sun rises!" Poison hissed, putting his paw under my stomach and shooing me toward the apprentices den. I staggered to my paws and dove for the den without another word.

Sorry if it's a short chapter! Next one will possibly be a bit longer =^_^=

Chapter Seventeen - Revenge Best Served to the Head

I stayed in my nest until the sun started to rise. I didn't get a blink of sleep that night, and I felt it as I stood up and cleaned my fur. Stiff as a tree trunk, I felt fear shake me up as I thought the worst of what I'd be punished with that day.

Will Mudclaw nearly kill me? Will someone kill me? Is Poison going to put me in the BloodClan Hunger Games? Constant thoughts flooded my mind and not once did I think of sleeping. With the sounds of Mistyfoot and Ice battling almost all night, it made me more scared to sleep, fearing I'd dream of battles between Mudclaw and I.

I padded out into the open just as Bloodpaw and Mothpaw began to stir. Cats were waking now and I felt a bit more confident about leaving the stuffy den.

I stretched in the camp, my paws sinking in the stirred mud. My paws were permanently stained from the mud and it bugged me that I would probably never be able to get it out of my fur.

Bloodpaw and Hawkpaw padded out of the den in a blur of fur and claws. They tumbled around the clearing, legs flailing as they practised battle training. Mothpaw and Deathpaw came out a bit after. I noticed Deathpaw wasn't interested with the fight at all, his eyes locked on Mothpaw. Mothpaw didn't look interested and it made me purr.

"All cats old enough to draw blood, gather to hear my words." Poison yowled on top of his new den. *That's new. I've never heard Scourge call the Clan like that. Does he really think he's better than Scourge?*

It made my fur stand on end as I thought Poison was trying to compete with how Scourge ruled the Clan. I sat beside Frostfur at the edge of the crowd and looked up at the new leader with a

strong glare.

Frostfur's stomach growled and made me whip around to look at her. "You should eat before going on patrol." I suggested in a whisper. She only shrugged and looked forward.

In the corner of my eye, I noticed Runningbrook's kits peeking out of the nursery. Their curious gazes locked onto Poison. Coldkit's eyes came to me for a brief heartbeat, but before I could try to look at him more clearly, he turned his gaze away. Runningbrook shooed them into the nursery with her tail with hushed words.

The three kits hadn't been out of the nursery in a while, and I didn't know why.

"This morning, I woke to find out Scourge had passed on," Poison began, looking to his paws in fake sorrow. He looked up as gasps rang among the Clan. "He had died of old age, the medicine cats confirmed and that the battle didn't weaken him. We killed the rogues earlier last night and I guess the poor leader had had enough of this, and he will live on in our minds as the evilest and smartest leader yet.

"But the sun will go on, the lives around you will live on and your life will be no different. Just better. I will be your new leader, one that will lead you through tough times and will show you no mercy. We are BloodClan cats and we don't show mercy!" Poison yowled, stomping his foot on the rock. Cheers - mostly from the original BloodClan warriors - roused from them in approval and satisfaction.

"BloodClan's name won't be forgotten, it's name will be remembered for seasons upon seasons as the most bloodthirsty cats in the whole forest!" Cheers erupted again. I noticed Frostfur wasn't impressed, her ears flat to her head and her tail flicking.

The cheers died down and Poison went on. "Ice, come forward," He announced, breaking the silence. I noticed whisks of mist forming around our paws. I hit my paw on the ground quietly and watched the most swirl up around my leg and fade to nothing.

"You've proven your loyalty and merciless heart, you're one of the

strongest and sneakiest warriors in BloodClan and I'm glad to announce I've chosen you to be our new deputy." Poison announced, hoping down and touching Ice's shoulder with his nose.

Ice puffed out his chest as the Clan called out his name in pride. Ice scared me. And for him to be deputy meant he thought he could get away with anything, and most likely be able to.

Poison raised his tail for silence and continued, "Now, about the BloodClan Hunger Games."

Not a word came from any BloodClan warrior. Ice looked over at the new BloodClan leader with a smirk, his eyes gleaming in excitement and the eagerness to see fights and death.

"Only one and a half moons till the Hunger Games begin. Battle practice will intensify and hunting won't be the main priority," Poison announced and uneasy murmurs came from the Clan. "What about hunting? We'll starve!" "Training to hunt is just as important as training to fight." The Clan protested. I didn't mind, as long as Mudclaw didn't purposely kill me during a lesson.

"You won't starve. Mentors won't be hunting, they'll be training and apprentices will be training to fight. The rest of the warriors will be checking the territory and hunting, no need to worry." Poison reassured and Ice nodded, his chin held high.

"Now, without further protests, I want patrols to search the Arena for rogues and to clear it out so it'll be ready when the time comes," Poison meowed. Ice stood up and began to announce the patrols that would go to the moor and other places.

"Violet, lead a patrol with Sandstorm, Rowansting, and Boulder and go to the moor," Ice began, "Frostfur take Feathertail and Oakfur and go hunt around the Island Marshland. Tornear take Minty, Goldenflower and Longtail to hunt in the pines." Frostfur stood up as he called her name and dipped her head to me, padding away with her patrol.

Mudclaw shoved me along in the direction of the other apprentices and mentors. I fluffed out my fur and padded near the read with

Mudclaw at my side. All was silent in the patrol as we headed to the training center.

We arrived in no time, and immediately Deathpaw and Hawkpaw began to tumble around. Sootfur and Ice tore them from each other and put them on either side of Mothpaw. We sat in a line with our mentors in front of us, waiting for further instruction.

Ice and Mudclaw did most of the talking.

"We're going to be tough on you, and you're going to try to be as tough as you can on us. No mercy, just attack. Mudclaw and I will show you what you'll practice to so with your mentor, then with a partener." Ice explained with his voice slightly raised.

Mudclaw and Ice got in their positions, in front of each other with unsheathed claws. Ice was down in a crouch while Mudclaw stood more straight. I watched as Ice jumped at Mudclaw, who then leaped in the air as Ice almost landed. Mudclaw pushed down onto Ice's shoulders and used his hind paws to shove his face in the blood-stained dirt.

I gasped in fear as I thought, *Mudclaw's going to kill me! This is how he'll do it, so everyone will think it's an accident...*

We battled together for what seemed to be days. My face was stained with dirt and blood and I fought hard to ignore the steering pain from my nose and shoulders. I was now partnered up with Bloodpaw. Mudclaw didn't have a scratch on him, but then again, neither did any of the other mentors.

Bloodpaw's face was battered, dirty, and bloody as well, but with his dark pelt it didn't show as bad as mine. I could only imagine how bad I looked.

Bloodpaw stood straight and I did the same. I decided to stand my ground and *not* get my muzzle bashed into the ground for once. "You jump." I insisted with my chin raised. Before I could get ready, Bloodpaw pounced and out of instinct and shock, I leaped up. I guess my mind was already prepared because as I realized I was in the air, I unsheathed my claws and landed on his lower back

harshly with my front paws and, digging into his spine, I smashed my hind legs onto his head and used my weight to force his head into the upset ground.

Bloodpaw instantly went limp. I hopped off of his limp body and felt my fur go on end. *Did I kill Bloodpaw? Is he faking it? Mudclaw's going to-* I was blown off my feet and sent across the clearing, rolling through the dirt dramatically.

"You complete mouse-brain!" Mudclaw yowled. Hawkpaw and Deathpaw poked the apprentice with their claws, while Mothpaw stood back with her eyes wide in shock. I staggered to my paws only to be knocked back down again, this time by Tess, Bloodpaw's mentor.

I hissed at her and at Mudclaw and backed away. "I didn't mean to! You said no mercy and I thought it meant to just go full force!" I defended myself in a loud tone.

"She's right. Bloodpaw could just be passed out, I'm sure it's nothing serious," Sootfur meowed calmly, separating me from Tess, the continued, "Tess, help me get her to the medicine cats." Tess relaxed a bit, letting her fur lie flat as Sootfur nudged her to her apprentice.

I wonder if she actually cares about his health, or if she just let her anger get to her since she knew she'd be blamed and punished by Poison for letting this happen...

Thornclaw and Ice helped lift Bloodpaw's limp body onto Tess and Mudclaw's backs'. We all fell in behind them; Mothpaw was beside me while Deathpaw hung around Mudclaw, keeping a close eye on Bloodpaw's face, which was bleeding from his nose. A small trickle of thick blood beaded up on his nose and occasionally dripped, while a few cuts on his muzzle welled up with blood and snaked down his muzzle to add to the blood dripping from his nose.

"Good move by the way. Despite the scare, you proved you're not a wimp after all." Mothpaw meowed. When I turned to her, I realized how small I was compared to her. Her legs - as well as the other apprentices- were much longer than mine. Everything about me was smaller and it made me lose confidence in myself. I made sure I

didn't look hurt, and faked my pride and pretended I was very confident.

I dipped my head to her and turned back to the front without saying anything in return.

I waited outside of the medicine den, worried that I'd be punished for murdering a Clanmate. Frostfur had come back shortly after I did, but was sent back out almost immediately on a hunting patrol in the forest that was around our camp with Cedarheart and Hoot.

As I waited for the medicine cats to come out with information, Rainwhisker, Brick, and Cloudtail came in with their apprentices Tabby, Birchpaw, and Ocean. They looked battered and tired; Ocean was cut up mostly around the face, showing she was punished while Birchpaw was clean of any wounds. He looked old enough to be a warrior, and I wondered when they'd be made warriors.

I didn't even clean my fur as I waited, I was just mainly worried about how big my punishment was going to be. Finally, I made up my mind and cleaned my fur as much as I could until Cinderpelt limped out. She looked frail but slightly proud.

Cats gathered around immediately - Mousefur shoved past everyone with a look of rage and hope I'm her gaze. "Bloodpaw was only knocked out, he's awake now and is dizzy and wounded. He'll be ready to train again in a quarter-moon or so." She announced and Mousefur squeezed past her to get into the den to see her son.

Relief flooded over me hard, and I felt it hard to walk away. My paws felt like they were imbedded with ice.

"Icepaw! You've got wounds just as bad as Bloodpaw, they need to be cleaned!" Littlecloud called to me as I stumbled to the apprentices den. I sighed and turned around and headed back as quick as my paws would take me.

"I'll give you some poppy seeds so you can sleep, too." Littlecloud murmured as I entered the medicine den. I dipped my head and laid in an empty nest beside a snoring Onewhisker and a sprawled out

Bloodpaw.

Chapter Eighteen - Announcements

It was only a few days before the BloodClan Hunger Games were going to begin, and as every day went by, my anxiety strengthened as I imagined me going into the deadly, gruesome battle that was for entertainment only.

We had trained non-stop everyday from dawn to dusk with only one battle with a small group of rogues in between. Bloodpaw had healed within two days and was eager to go train before he was aloud out of the medicine den. He was back in training four days after the accident.

I was eating a sparrow alone when Poison hops up onto his den and summons the Clan. It was early in the morning and Ice hadn't even made patrols yet. "All cats old enough to draw blood, gather to hear my words!"

I licked my lips after quickly finishing my prey and got up to sit with the crowd. I noticed Coldkit, Haykit, and Heatherkit were getting cleaned by Runningbrook and Onewhisker and I realized this must be their apprentice ceremony. Coldkit's amber gaze locked with my blue eyes for a quick heartbeat and then I blinked and he was turned away.

In a huff, I looked away and narrowed my eyes at my paws. *What did I do to make him ignore me? What did Haykit and Heatherkit say to him?* I wondered in frustration.

"By naming apprentices, we show that BloodClan will never be beaten and remain strong and merciless. Haykit, from now on, you'll be known as Haypaw. Mistyfoot, you will be Haypaw's mentor." Poison announced. The grey she-cat stepped forward - her eyes serious and unexcited - and touched her nose to her new apprentices'.

Poison repeated that and announced Goldenflower as Coldpaw's mentor and Boulder as Heatherpaw's.

The Clan cheered their names half-heartily, mostly coming from Runningbrook and Onewhisker, along with the other apprentices and the new apprentices' mentors. I muttered a cheer or two and prepared to stand when Poison kept going.

"Ocean, Birchpaw, you've proven you're worthy to be warriors. Step forward." I tilted my head as I wondered about Tabby. Tabby had been two moons old when they had found her, wandering in Twolegplace, yowling for food. Scourge was on patrol when he heard her, and he decided to take her in.

At least, that's what Tawnypelt told Deathpaw one night as kits.

I glanced at Tabby and she exchanged a glance with Ocean as she left her to stand beside Birchpaw.

"Birchpaw, you're brave and cunning, and you've proven your loyalty and strength many times." Poison meowed, "Birchpaw, you'll now be known as Birchleaf." The Clan waited until Ocean was told she was a warrior to cheer their names.

"Now, Tabby," Poison started, and all eyes turned to the muscular brown she-cat. She stood up straight as all eyes focused on her. "You've proven your loyalty, strength, braveness, and you're quiet like the other guards. I am happy to say you'll be a guard like Lostface and Blackfoot." Tabby's name rippled among the Clan.

I hadn't of even known they accepted new guards unless a death occurred.

"And as for new kits," Poison began yet again, turning to Minty, "I'm glad to say Minty is expecting Hoot's kits. She will be moving into the nursery today." Cats gathered around the mates and congratulated them. Hoot nuzzled Minty under her chin and I could tell she was purring. It was rare to see cats purr now.

I only then noticed her swollen belly as she waddled into the nursery, Hoot close behind. I assume he was going to help we settle

in.

The Clan went back to normal; Ice announced patrols: Tawnypelt led one to the Island Marshland, Rowansting joined one to hunt in the low moor, Longtail took a large patrol to clear out the Arena, while Mousefur took one to the pines to hunt.

The new apprentices were taken out with Deathpaw, Mothpaw, and Hawkpaw - plus their mentors - to see the territory they hadn't yet been shown. Bloodpaw was taken out for some one-on-one battle training with Tess while Mudclaw kept his head close together with Snake and Poison. Snake was Ice's brother, and I knew whatever Snake found out, he'd tell his brother.

I padded over to Mudclaw and prodded him with my claw. The warriors had hushed as I approached. "Are we battle training?" I mewed. Mudclaw glared down at me and responded grimly, "When I'm done here. Go clean your fur or something!" I narrowed my eyes at the brown, muscular - and rude for that matter - cat. Reluctantly, I padded away and headed toward the medicine cats' den to see how they were.

"Icepaw! So nice to see you." Cinderpelt purred, her once dull eyes turning bright. Littlecloud and Mudfur greeted me as well, but Barkface only dipped his head from where he sat in his nest. The old medicine cat looked frailer than any of the medicine cats, his muzzle freckled with grey, his bones sticking out. He was bound to die in his sleep any night now.

"How are you feeling, Barkface?" I mewed softly, padding over to the old cat. "Old and tired." He grunted, shakily standing. "And cranky." Mudfur muttered under his breath. Cinderpelt let out a *mrrow* of amusement, but Barkface didn't look so amused.

"I've given you plenty of fennel for your sore hips and daisy leaf for your joints. Plus, you've been given chamomile not long ago, so you'll be strengthened up soon." Littlecloud reassured the brown cat.

"So, what did you come in for, Icepaw?" Mudfur asked as he picked out the dead herbs. "Mudclaw is too busy talking up a storm so I

decided to come see how you guys were doing." I responded.

"All is good in here. Boring and crowded, but good." Cinderpelt mewed, shooing me out with her nose. "You should be heading off now. I'm sure your mentor won't be pleased if you're talking to us. Good luck!" I sighed and headed over to the now standing Mudclaw.

As I began to pad toward him, he dipped his head to Poison and Snake and turned to me. "We'll practise today how to fight near and in water." He mumbled without looking at me. I didn't reply, just padded on his heels.

My heart sped up and the fur along my spine rose up in fright. *He's going to teach me how to swim? Why? Is he going to drown me and call it an accident? Or is he preparing me for the Hunger Games because he knows something I don't?*

Chapter Nineteen - Drowning Practice

We came to the Main River, the dark, scary water churning as it sped downstream. I swallowed, scared for my life. "We'll learn basic battle moves and how to avoid the water." Mudclaw explained. I nodded as he spoke.

"I'll come at you, you'll be here-" He pointed with a claw at where I would stand, which was at the rivers' edge. I fought the urge to let my eyes widen. "-and you're going to push me into the water. If you fall in, try to swim to shore. If you don't I'll get you out." I gave him a small nod and took my place. I tried to hide the fact that my legs were trembling.

I took a deep breath and prepared for him to come at me. I still wasn't sure how I was to do what he had instructed me to do, but I wasn't about to ask questions, in fear he'd get angry.

As if he had read my mind, Mudclaw sighed, "When I come at you - since you're small - you'll dive under my belly and trip me, then you push me into the water. If it doesn't work, scratch out the tripping part." I blinked, kind of confused, but reluctantly I nodded.

Without warning, Mudclaw tore at me, dirt and grass flying up behind him. He didn't stop and I didn't move, suddenly not able to remember what I was to do.

Mudclaw halted - dirt splattering onto my paws and chest - as I backed up in shock, expecting him to fly into me. He wouldn't have, but it was too late as I slipped into the river.

I didn't even have time to take air as I plunge into the Main River. I flailed my paws but I didn't go anywhere other than sideways. My vision was blurred as I rolled down the river, searching for the surface. A rock hit me in the stomach, knocking all air out of my lungs. I fought the desperate urge to suck in, feeling as if something

was wrapped tightly around my throat.

I felt a sharp pain in my scruff as the murky water began to fade to black. A brown shape lifted me up so my head was out of the water. I gasped for air before I could even register what was happening. I coughed and gasped, coughed and gasped until he pushed me toward shore. Splashing my way to it, I was relieved to feel the ground again. I crawled onto shore and took huge gasps, happy to not be underwater any longer. Shaking out my fur, water spraying everywhere, I let out a growl as I saw Mudclaw's whiskers twitch with amusement.

"Don't tense up because in battle no one hesitates to kill a frozen apprentice." Mudclaw stated. Every step he took he shook his paws to get rid of the water. I was glad he didn't look agitated about the accident. He then stood in his original spot and fluffed out his brown fur. *I bet that's the best - and probably first - bath he's had in moons,* I thought with a snort.

I noticed his ear twitch and I prepared for him to come at me, thankful for Scourge to have taught me to look for certain signs. Just as I had assumed, he raced at me, eyes narrowed in concentration.

Once close enough, I dove under his belly and slid in behind him. Mudclaw didn't have time to turn. I used my front paws - standing on my hind legs - to shove him forward. He staggered a bit, but didn't go anywhere.

"Try to push me into it as hard as you can," Mudclaw gestured to me as I sat down in frustration and embarrassment. "We'll wait to finish that move until you've mastered shoving heavier things than you."

By the time we entered camp after our training, I felt like I was going to collapse under my own weight. Water logged and exhausted, I dropped my vole into the fresh-kill pile. On our way back, we had stopped to hunt since we knew not much hunting was going to occur, even though it was instructed.

Just as I padded away, letting Mudclaw drop his thrush, I was

suddenly shot into a vision, a similar one to the other I had had a long, long time ago.

A small grey kit with brilliant, huge blue eyes scampered in with a fluffy, black she-kit with glowing green eyes and a shining golden tom followed him on either side, as if to guide him. A light brown tabby she-cat with one white paw padded in soon after, gasping, "Brambleclaw, you're a father!"

Brambleclaw? Who's that?

I watched from the side as a dark tabby tom rushed over. Soon, a slightly smaller and less muscular she-cat stalked into the camp, her mouth holding herbs and her eyes covering sorrow with delight.

The vision then blurred out to a time where a white cat was fighting a brown tabby. From then the same cat was at Twolegplace, with many battle scars scattered all over her body. *Is that... me? Or is it that Icecloud cat?*

A familiar voice echoed in my ears out of no where, whispering, "*Ice will grow around the territories with the Feather at it's feet. Blood will be no more, they will suffer their defeat.*"

I jolted awake, legs flailing to sit up and heart racing. I soon came to realize Mudclaw, Cinderpelt, and Littlecloud were surrounding me. All eyes were on me, eyes wide with shock. Cinderpelt dipped her head to my mentor and he stalked out of the medicine den.

"Why am I in the medicine den? What's going on?" I mewed, stifling a yawn.

"Mudclaw dragged you in here saying you tensed up suddenly and fell onto your side, out cold." Littlecloud answered. Cinderpelt finished for him, "Ever since you were brought in here you've been twitching and flailing around. It's known to be a seizure, but no cat has one unless they are receiving a prophecy..." She trailed off, exchanging a glance with the smaller medicine cat tom.

I noticed Mudfur and Barkface weren't in the den. "Do you know why you fainted?" Cinderpelt asked with her head tilted to the side.

I hesitated. *Do I trust them?*

I finally decided to tell them, explaining the visions as a kit and the one I had recently gotten, finishing with the announcement of the prophecy. "What does it mean...?" Littlecloud breathed, speaking to himself. "If only we could speak to StarClan; we might be able to get more answers."

"Where's Mudfur and Barkface?" I mewed. Cinderpelt turned around as I began to question and shrugged it off. "They went out with Tabby and Lostface to find more herbs. Poison said while you were training that he found signs of rogues," I nodded at the response.

"Am I okay to go?" I murmured after a few awkward heartbeats of silence, anxious to get out of the warm den. Littlecloud nodded and turned to Cinderpelt, helping her fix the stocks for probably the hundredth time that day.

Update on Allegiances

BloodClan~

Leader:
Poison

Deputy:
Ice Apprentice: Hawkpaw

Guards:
Lostface
Brambleclaw
Crowfeather
Blackfoot
Jaggedtooth
Tabby

Medicine Cats:
Cinderpelt
Littlecloud
Barkface
Mudfur

Warriors:
Loudbelly
Tess Apprentice: Bloodpaw
Hoot (Minty's mate)
Violet
Brick
Longtail
Snake
Sootfur Apprentice: Deathpaw
Rainwhisker
Brackenfur
Dustpelt
Mistyfoot Apprentice: Haypaw
Sandstorm

Graystripe
Frostfur
Goldenflower Apprentice: Coldpaw
Cloudtail
Oakfur (Mousefur's mate)
Boulder Apprentice: Heatherpaw
Russetfur
Mudclaw Apprentice: Icepaw
Webfoot
Tornear
Shadepelt
Onewhisker
Runningbrook (Onewhisker's mate)
Rowansting
Thornclaw Apprentice: Mothpaw
Cedarheart
Feathertail
Burn
Snipe
Snapper
Timber
Birchleaf
Ocean
Tawnypelt
Mousefur

Apprentices:
Bloodpaw
Hawkpaw
Mothpaw
Icepaw
Deathpaw
Haypaw
Coldpaw
Heatherpaw

Queens:
Minty (expecting)

Chapter Twenty - Misty Newcomers

The next morning was foggy and dark, grey clouds hovering above. The air was warm and misty as I left the apprentices den. Ice stood in the center of the clearing, ordering patrols.

I only watched - not listening to Ice - as the warriors left for patrol. Rowansting left with Longtail, Birchleaf, and Snake. Rainwhisker took Webfoot and Tornear. Onewhisker lead Shadepelt, Feathertail and Oakfur out of camp soon after, Mousefur's patrol with Cloudtail, Ocean, and Loudbelly on their heels. Brick suggested she took a patrol to check Twolegplace for trouble, taking Dustpelt and Brackenfur with her.

He then instructed Tess, Thornclaw, and Boulder to take their apprentices out. Then he called together a patrol filled with Sootfur and Mistyfoot to take their apprentices out. Ice flicked his tail to Mudclaw and Goldenflower. Coldpaw, Hawkpaw, and I followed close behind.

We padded through the dim forest, mist swirling around our paws. I felt like I was in the real Dark Forest, but I knew I wasn't. My fur stood on end as we padded silently through the territory.

Just as we came to the battle training clearing - which was surprisingly empty - a few crows launched themselves into the air, calling out loudly. I didn't see it coming, so I ended up jumping a tail-length into the air, the fog following and disappearing quickly.

Hawkpaw and Bloodpaw purred aloud and murmured things I didn't catch. I growled at them with my lips curled in a warning snarl.

"We'll begin by you four racing to the half bridge by the lake. It's easy to see, though you've never been there. Race there and back. Last one gets a *lesson*." Ice ordered.

We took our places and Ice raised his tail in front of us. I unsheathed my claws and ducked down to get ready to run. "Go!" Ice yowled and all four of us dashed away. Hawkpaw and Bloodpaw took the lead and I used all my strength to get by them.

We raced beside a stream that lead down to the lake and I decided to take a short cut. I could already see the half bridge and I knew I was going to be in third if I didn't take a short cut.

The swirling water made my heart lurch at the thought of being taken away, but I leaped anyway. I soared through the air and landed on the slippery shore, my hind legs in the water. Taking a deep breath, I tore away, taking the lead.

I forced myself to think there was something chasing me and made it there first. I skidded to a halt at the half bridge, the water calm with fog on the surface. Gulping, I realized I wasn't alone.

One tall silver and white tom with scars all over him, another dark brown with menacing amber eyes, and the last one was dark grey with white legs. The tall one was lapping at water as I had halted, while the dark grey one was keeping watch. The brown tom stopped lapping when I had come into view, I assumed.

I gulped and for once, I wished Hawkpaw, Bloodpaw, and Coldpaw would hurry up and get to the half bridge. "Are you a BloodClan kit running away?" The brown tom asked. I looked for humour in his gaze but he was serious. I unsheathed my claws and hissed at him, backing away. All three of them came to his side.

"I'm a BloodClan apprentice! I'll rip you to shreds if you come any closer!" I snarled loudly. The three rogues exchanged puzzled glances and then the brown one spoke again. "Take us to your leader." He meowed, unafraid. Though they didn't seem to be startled by me, the three of them didn't move any closer as I had asked.

Just then, Hawkpaw and Bloodpaw tore into the clearing in a fury of claws and fur. "I'm the winner!" Bloodpaw shouted. "No, I am!" Hawkpaw sneered, climbing over Bloodpaw's body to get to the half bridge first.

Fur matted and fluffed up, Hawkpaw started to rub in Bloodpaw's face that he had won, but then realized I was here, as well as others.

Coldpaw came in trotting, then slowed down until he collapsed on the half bridge. Breathing heavily and fast, he laid there. "Who are these three?" Bloodpaw growled.

"Get off our territory or we'll kill you three!" Hawkpaw yowled. The three still didn't look frightened.

"I am Deadly. This is Claw-" The dark brown tom meowed, gesturing to the tall silver and white tom, then turned to the dark grey tom, "-and this is Willie."

"Where is the leader of BloodClan? With this Clan taking what's left of the prey, we can't get anything to eat other than crowfood..." The dark grey tom - Willie - mewed. Bloodpaw and Hawkpaw snarled at them, not answering them.

"Bloodpaw, Hawkpaw! Back down. We should get Ice to get Poison." I hissed. The two didn't listen. Turning to the rogues, I turned around to leave, "Fine. Come with me, I'll take you to see our leader and he'll make the decision," They followed close on my heels with Coldpaw on one side and Bloodpaw and Hawkpaw at the rear.

I felt like a real warrior, leading a patrol through the territory. But my glory faded as I realized that I wouldn't be a warrior for a while. Or never, if I ended up going into BloodClan's Hunger Games.
***
Ice had taken the lead and left me to the side. We made our way to the camp where Poison was laying upon his den. Tail flicking and eyes closed he didn't acknowledge we were even here.

"Poison," Ice meowed as Mudclaw and Goldenflower pushed the rogues forward. The remaining cats in the camp emerged from their dens at the sudden tension in Ice's tone. Poison opened his eyes and set his daggers on the newcomers without moving.

He stood up gracefully, his tail snaking around his paws as he sat back down. "Who are they?" Poison growled. "We have enough

mouths to feed."

Deadly stepped forward while the other two waited on either side of the brown tom. "I am Deadly, and these are my friends, Claw and Willie. We have been struggling to feed ourselves since you cats get all the prey, and we were wondering if we could join you." His voice was even and not one of the three looked scared.

"We only let cats in if we know for sure they're worth our time." Poison snarled with an evil look in his green gaze. "Blackfoot, Brambleclaw, Lostface, come here." The three guards stalked their way to the bottom of Poison's den.

The three newcomers exchanged puzzled glances and unsheathed their claws. Poison already looked pleased, and I knew it was about to go down.

Chapter Twenty-One - The Day Has Come

The BloodClan warriors backed away to give the six cats room. Poison didn't move while Ice took his place below him. Lostface, Brambleclaw, and Blackfoot were less than ready when the three rogues leaped into battle with a bloodcurdling cry. Deadly leaped for Brambleclaw, Willie went for Lostface, and Blackfoot was attacked by Claw.

Mudclaw lowered his head to me, nudging me harshly and growled, "These cats aren't bad. I wonder how well *you* would do," I gave him a puzzled look and he began to purr. "The next rogue that comes around, I'll make sure you're the one who fights them."

I growled at him and turned back to the fight. My fur bristled as I forced myself to stand down, wanting to cut Mudclaw's ears off and make him beg for mercy.

Lostface hissed at Willie and slashed him in the face, and he did it back almost as hard. I cringed as Lostface's scars were ripped open. Lostface paused as she took in where he had hit her and suddenly I could tell how badly Willie regretted his decision.

Lostface lost her temper and leaped onto Willies back and clawed at his throat from behind. Poison called the fight off. Blackfoot and Brambleclaw got off the other two cats and rushed over to Lostface to get her off the injured cat.

Poison gestured with his nose for the guards to take Willie to the medicine cat den while the other two calmly licked their mild wounds. I watched the two guards drag the heavily breathing rogue to the medicine den. Cinderpelt and Littlecloud vanished quickly into the den, though we all knew they had been watching. The medicine cats let out excited squeals to see visitors, and the guards ended up not coming out.

"You three have been accepted. You're far more vicious then I had expected. You're now warriors of BloodClan." Poison announced and the Clan cheered their names.

"Okay, Icepaw, I think you should head to sleep now. We have a lot of training to do tomorrow." Mudclaw insisted, flicking his tail toward the apprentice's den with a hard and serious glare. I nodded and followed in behind the other apprentices that were also told to go to sleep.

Hawkpaw and Deathpaw didn't even try to settle as they were leaping at each other through out the night. I was lucky to be in the corner, while Mothpaw, Heatherpaw, and Haypaw weren't so lucky as they constantly got stepped on. The two got too loud and Ice had to come in to tell them to be quiet.

I finally got to sleep as soon as Ice left; all thoughts leaving my mind and sending me into a world I wished I had been born in: the four Clans.

***

A few days later and we all began to prepare for the ceremony. Poison would announce who was being sent into the Hunger Games and at the back of my mind, I knew I was going to be one of the unlucky ones.

Tawnypelt and Rowansting were surrounding Deathpaw, giving him tips if he goes in and I noticed Tawnypelt had tried to clean him, but he kept moving away with hisses. Tawnypelt nor Rowansting spoke to me, not even Mudclaw. I sat in my old spot and waited, watching everyone do their thing. I felt lonelier than ever, but I hid it and kept quiet.

Frostfur padded over just as my eyes began to close with fatigue. "I just wanted to wish you good luck. I don't know who's going in, and I hope nether of us are chosen, but I wish you the best of luck." She whispered. We weren't supposed to wish cats luck, Scourge made it a rule. I dipped my head and sat up, "Thank you. You as well."

"We should get ready. I don't want to be messy when we go to the

ceremony, or we might be picked out because of it!" Frostfur purred. I nodded, feeling a bit better knowing I had at least one friend in the cruel, blood-thirsty Clan of freaks.

Chapter Twenty-Two - The Reaping

I sat in the crowd, trembling greatly in fear. Poison was on the Great Rock with a glare set on almost every cat. All the guards sat below Poison, their backs straight and faces emotionless. Ice was sitting beside Poison, his cold daggers scanning each and every cat.

"I, Poison, leader of BloodClan, have decided to cancel this years Hunger Games." Poison announced, standing sure and tall. I exchanged glances with Frostfur, who was on the right side of me while Deathpaw was on the other. She only shrugged. Tawnypelt and Rowansting sat straight just behind me. "Just kidding!" He yowled with such a crazy look, I was sure that looks really *could* kill. I could hear him purring as everything went awkwardly quiet.

Poison stopped purring and began the ceremony, which was known as The Reaping to some cats. "Ice and I have decided on the twelve *lucky* subjects that will be going into the Hunger Games. Please separate to different places according to the Clan you were once in."

I followed Tawnypelt and Rowansting with Deathpaw beside me. Frostfur went with the ThunderClan cats, and I longed to run beside her, even though I wished I was a WindClan cat.

"ThunderClan, you're first." Poison growled. He quickly announced three cats names, Cloudtail, Frostfur, and Sandstorm. My heart lurched as Frostfur's frail body hurried to sit beside Cloudtail. I felt bad for Cloudtail in a way. Lostface didn't even care that he was gone, but I noticed she watched him in the corner of her one good eye.

"ShadowClan, you're next." Poison announced as his eyes laid on the cats that surrounded me. I swallowed and prayed to StarClan that I wasn't going in. My heart sped up as Ashfoot and Cedarheart were called. *Please not me... Please be Deathpaw...* "Icepaw." Poison finished, laying his poisonous green gaze on me. I gasped and hid

behind Deathpaw. I didn't move from where I was. "Get going! You're embarrassing me!" Deathpaw snarled over his shoulder, but I refused to move.

"Icepaw." Poison demanded, his voice very serious and impatient. I still didn't budge, mumbling words to StarClan that they'd take me away or that they wouldn't see me. *Firestar! Bluestar! Help, please! Yellowtooth, Tallstar, Crookedstar, please save me! Don't let them take me!* I begged, swallowing my wails.

But I knew as Poison flicked his tail and as Lostface and Jaggedtooth came trotting over, that StarClan didn't care.

I squealed as Lostface grabbed my scruff and dragged me to the other former ShadowClan cats. I felt hot with embarrassment as I let my fear get the best of me, everyone's eyes locked on me.

"WindClan, you're next." I sat there, beside Ashfoot, with my head down. My heart didn't go back to its normal pace until WindClan was done. Three more cats, Mudclaw, Haypaw, and Webfoot sat there. My eyes widened as Mudclaw smirked at me. *He really* is *going to kill me!! Why me, StarClan, why?*

I noticed as Haypaw came up that he was trembling just as bad as I was at the beginning of the ceremony, if not worse. He was breathing heavily with his eyes wide as if to say, *What's going to happen to me?*

As I looked back to the crowd another vision came to me. So many more cats were gathered, everyone was talking happily and gathered among each other. Everyone suddenly hushed and separated and I realized, as a familiar voice rung through the island, that Firestar was speaking. I looked up to see Blackfoot, Firestar, Onewhisker, and Mistyfoot.

I came to reality as Feathertail began crying out. Hawkpaw and Loudbelly were among the eleven of us now. I gulped as I caught eyes with Hawkpaw. He curled his lip at me in a snarl and I looked away in a hurry.

"*Ice will grow around the territories with the Feather at it's feet. Blood*

will be no more, they will suffer their defeat." A soft voice murmured in my ear. I glanced over at Ashfoot, but she was silent with a hard stare at nothing in particular.

Does this mean... That I am destined to fight in the BloodClan Hunger Games? I looked to my paws and studied the ground.

Almost sure I knew what the prophecy meant, I felt confidence surge through me. *With Frostfur's good luck wish, I will win this StarClan-forsaken battle with Frostfur at my side.*

Chapter Twenty-Three - Planning it Out

I'm dedicating this chapter to @Blazingfirethecat because a friend said you loved my story! Thanks for reading =^_^= Merry Christmas!

***

I blinked open my eyes to my surroundings. With the clouds covering the sun, heavy with snow, I shivered though I didn't mind it. I had also grown used to the stench of the Twolegplace.

I sat up, hunched over so I didn't bang my head on the top of the boxes that were stacked around me. I had pushed two of them apart just so I could sleep there, and only me.

I wasn't the only cat who lived in this Twolegplace. I was usually helping Lily and Alice scavenge for food, they were other loners that lived around. We didn't have any problems that we couldn't take care of, mostly just hungry or loose dogs.

It was usually quiet here. I had forced myself to grow used to the barking and yelling that rung in the cold, silent night. The occasional screech of the monsters' paws as they tore away on the Thunderpath didn't scare me as much now.

I padded out of my den and fluffed out my coarse white fur. Alice's shinny black pelt hopped off of the fence and padded toward me. She reminded me of Scourge, but when I had asked her about him, she didn't even know who he was. "Where's Lily?" I asked her and she simply shrugged, replying, "I don't know, she could be scavenging early?" I nodded and looked around.

"It would be a lot easier if we lived in a Clan." I groaned. Alice tilted her head to the side, "Well why don't you, Lily, and I kill that Poison cat you mentioned before and take over the Clans? You told

me before that there used to be four Clans... Maybe we could create them again?" Alice suggested, her eyes narrowed.

My heart skipped a beat at the idea. "You're brilliant! You're so brilliant! Why didn't I think of this before? Find Lily, we're saving the Clans!" I gasped. Alice dipped her head and trotted off, calling out Lily's name. Dogs barked at the sudden yowls that she called out, but it didn't bother her.

"Run faster!" I called to her and she tore off, still calling out Lily's name. What a fool, I thought with a mild purr.

I went the opposite way, sniffing for her scent. I found her scent but it was semi-new, as if she had gone that way earlier that morning. Trotting after her scent trail, it got stronger as I passed a Twolegnest and then rounded a corner to find a dark alley.

Garbage cans gleamed at the back and I jumped as something dropped a cans' metal lid. I eased as Lily's silver-and-white pelt came into sight with a dead, stinking rat hanging in her jaws.

"All I could find was this." She muttered after dropping the pile of infection and grease. "No need to search for food, we're saving the Clans and claiming what was rightfully ours! We're going to kill Poison and take the territory back!"

Lily's eyes narrowed and she flicked her tail. "With what army? There are three of us that are all bones. We can't beat him or his Clan." She hissed, padding away after grabbing her small feast.

Lily began to rant without looking at me. "Besides," I hurried after Lily as she trotted back to our meeting spot, where Alice, Lily, and I gathered to share tongues. "What has this Clan done for me? I know nothing about any cat there and I know no one except you, so why would I save their fluffy-touches?"

"I know you know no one, but once the Clans are settled again you'll make friends and you won't starve every leaf-bare! You won't have to live in this loud, stinky place anymore." I insisted. We stopped at the gathering place and she dropped the gross rat.

Looking over at me, she gave up and sighed, "Fine. But we'll need a plan."

***

A/N-

Thanks so much for the reads and votes! Chapter 24 won't be out for a bit, and I apologize for any cussing or rudeness that has gone on in Warrior Cat Facts due to the ignorance of others.

Sorry for the short chapter, hope you enjoyed it, and have a very Merry Christmas warrior cat lovers!

Chapter Twenty-Four - Time Has Changed

Lily, Alice, and I padded through the silent field. Visions of a brighter, happier world flashed through my mind as our group headed through the moor. "We should hunt before we go see BloodClan, then find a few original Clans cats and team up?" Lily and Alice dipped their heads and in satisfaction, I led them through the open moor. *Yes, because we have that much time in our paws right now...* I bit my tongue.

I paused as I spotted a pigeon pecking at a few seeds. "Stay here," I whispered. I flicked my tail and stalked forward. *Lets see if I still have my skills...*

I stalked forward until I was just behind it, and then pounced, killing it swiftly. "That's the most we've ever eaten in a while!" Alice gasped, trotting forward happily. "We should find somewhere where we won't be seen as easily." Lily growled, gazing around with a fluffy tail and narrowed eyes.

I rolled my blue eyes and sighed, mumbling half to myself, "You are *such* a joy to be around, you know." Thankfully the grumpy she-cat didn't seem to hear my retort.

Heading off with the pigeon in my jaws, I lead the three of us off of the flat, grassy field and into the forest in between the pines and the moor. I turned to face the two she-cats, suggesting through feathers, "BloodClan camps here. Maybe we should-" but I was interrupted by a familiar voice. One I had forgotten about for the best.

"Icefeather?" Deathpaw mewed. I dropped the pigeon and whipped around with a snarl on my face. "No! I'm not here to kill you." He reassured. His claws were sheathed, fur was flat, eyes were hollow and dark with no sign of hatred. Fresh wounds were scattered along his face and shoulders.

I let my fur lie flat and I settled. "We're here to kill Poison." I hissed through narrowed eyes. "Job's already done, I'm afraid. The Clan has been in battle with each other ever since. We killed Ice, too, but the rogues still seem to think BloodClan should be alive." Deathpaw explained.

I would assume he'd want BloodClan to thrive as well. Alice and Lily came forward, Alice's curious gaze rested on the cats behind Deathpaw. "Yet you're still taking out a patrol?" I snorted.

"We were leaving the Clan for good. Tawnypelt died of injuries, Barkface and Littlecloud were killed, Burn, Hoot, Jaggedtooth, Sootfur, Tornear, Webfoot all died so far." Deathpaw informed me. I swallowed down my fear and sorrow and gave him a hard stare.

"Once Lily, Alice, and I eat, we'll help you get the Clans together." I promised. Though happy for us to help, the tom still seemed reluctant to go back.

Deathpaw, Bloodpaw, Heatherpaw, Rainwhisker, and Timber all waited for us to finish our meal. And as soon as we did, Deathpaw gestured for us to follow. Lily's fur was on end while Alice was at complete ease, running around the group in excitement while taking in everything she could.

"You do realize you're about to go into a deadly battle with merciless cats, right?" Heatherpaw murmured while looking at the fluffy black she-cat. "I do, but I've never been here! This territory is beautiful." She gasped. Lily rolled her eyes and grunted something I didn't catch.

We entered the camp and I fought the urge to run back out as the cats were in a complete riot. Bodies of the dead still laid on the muddy ground. Blood stained the ground and the pelts of every cat here. Lily didn't even think, she just jumped in and attacked the first rogue-looking cat she found.

Alice cowered behind me with a whimper, suddenly scared and hopeless. I ran through the camp, dodging claws and teeth, and jumped on top of Poison's old den. I could see Ice's body, mangled and limp, as well as Poison's and everyone else's that Deathpaw

mentioned. No one seemed to care that they were stepping all over them.

"Enough!" I yowled, but no one seemed to hear my plead. "I said, *enough*!" I screeched. All cats looked over at me in shock. Their eyes were flooded with rage and hatred and I feared the Clan once more.

"As an apprentice, I found the Moonpool. StarClan sent me a message saying the four Clans will go back to how it once was. BloodClan is no more, for ThunderClan, ShadowClan, WindClan, and RiverClan will rule the territories once again! But this time, not even a blood-thirsty Clan will destroy them!"

Chapter Twenty-Five - Final Fairwells

All eyes were on me, some were glares and some hopeful. I didn't know what else I was to say.

Soon after, without even thinking, words came out of my mouth. "This Clan is pathetic. No cat should have to live this life! I am recreating the Clans that were meant to be..." I looked around the camp.

"Either the *hard* way, or the *easy* way." I snarled. No cat answered as I stood there with narrowed eyes and a bushy tail. Finally I had had enough since no one would say anything. "Find your original Clanmates of the four original Clans and build your homes for real this time," I announced, my voice echoing in the silent, stained campground.

"Anyone who stands in anyones way is murdered!" Cheers rose in the camp. I felt content by what had gone down. Slowly and surely, one by one, each cat seperated into five groups, the smallest containing Snake, Brick, and Violet. The most had Lostface, Brambleclaw, Cinderpelt, Dustpelt, Brackenfur, Rainwhisker, Greystripe, Birchleaf, Mousefur, Bloodpaw, and Thornclaw. Mousefur had to be escorted by Dustpelt and Rainwhisker since she was so badly injured.

Blackfoot, Deathpaw, Rowansting, Timber, Tabby, Russetfur, Boulder, and Oakfur gathered together and stood proud while Mudfur, Mothpaw, Minty, Mistyfoot, Snipe, and Ocean didn't look as confident with low numbers, but stood strong.

Onewhisker, Coldpaw, Heatherpaw, Crowfeather and Tess sat together with Runningbrook at their paws. Grief struck me hard but I swallowed my emotions down and watched the cats as they looked up to me.

Blackfoot stepped forward, "I will be leader of ShadowClan. ShadowClan will be strong in no time." He announced with a blank look. I dipped my head.

"I'll be leader of RiverClan." Mistyfoot meowed as she padded in beside Blackfoot. "We've all agreed I will be ThunderClan's leader." Brambleclaw stood beside the two new leaders.

Onewhisker limped away from his kits and dead mate to announce he'd be WindClan's leader. "I will be WindClan's medicine cat," I announced, hopping down from the rock den. "Cinderpelt, Mudfur, you will help the ShadowClan and WindClan medicine cats to learn, please. Also, new rules: Medicine cats go where they please, they're the healers of these Clans, and don't you forget it!"

Cheers rose among the wounded as they agreed. "Icefeather," Brick stalked forward. "Snake, Violet, and I would like to go to Twolegplace. Clan life isn't for us, we've realized." She murmured. Without any thought, I replied with a dip of my head, "Very well. Good luck."

"I say we all bury the dead before we separate." Brambleclaw insisted. All the other new leaders agreed with slow nods. "We will sit vigil afterwards as well!" Mistyfoot announced.
***
Midnight had come by the time every deceased warrior was buried. We stayed by their burial spots until the sunlight broke the sky's dark surface.

As I began to leave with Onewhisker leaning on my shoulder, Blackfoot called out, "Any rules that existed before BloodClan took over is to exist now as well. Especially no tresspassing, stealing, or killing without any reason."

"Good luck to you all," Mistyfoot called over her shoulder as she led her tiny group away. We all said our farewells and good luck wishes and then we went out separate ways.

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A/N:
Last chapter will be coming out soon :) hope you enjoyed and have a

good day!
P_A83 out :3

Chapter Twenty-Six - Epilogue

It had been roughly two moons since the last day BloodClan stood, and it was the full moon, meaning we were to be at the island by moonhigh to gather with each Clan. Leaf-fall had come but WindClan wasn't too worried since we had few cats to feed. We all knew no Clan would fight us until at least leaf-bare because no one needed to. We were all on good terms for now.

I couldn't wait to see how the other Clans were managing and to my surprise, I was anxious to see Deathpaw. Though he was a jerk, he was my brother and I did miss him ever so slightly.

Onestar led the way onto the island silently. It seemed that we were the first ones there. But soon after we settled, RiverClan joined us. Minty wasn't with them; I assumed she was nursing by then. Mothpaw and Mudfur joined me where I sat. "How's WindClan?" Mudfur murmured.

"Doing well," I replied. "We set camp away from the Arena and we're planning on finding a way to get rid of it, not much prey with the chilly weather either but we're doing fine. What about RiverClan?" Mudfur shrugged, "Mothpaw is learning quickly, we've set camp, and settled in just fine." I dipped my head with a look of gratitude.

I turned my attention to the group of cats I recognized as ThunderClan. They settled in and the murmurs became louder. I envied their amount of cats that survived. It bugged me that there were so few cats in WindClan.

Without having to wait, ShadowClan joined us shortly after ThunderClan. *We are all weak and easy targets against ThunderClan. Great.*

Tabby and Cinderpelt headed toward the three of us to complete the medicine cat group. It surprised me that Tabby was the medicine cat. I guess after being a heartless guard, she wanted to

become something more. "How's everything going?" Cinderpelt mewed as she sat down beside me. Her blue eyes glittered with concern and joy. With everything she's seen and had to live through, it surprised me how happy she was.

I watched the - I assumed - new deputies take their places below their leaders. Rowansting, Ocean, Birchleaf, and Owlwhisker sat together. Tess was Owlwhisker's old name.

"Everything's been good. How's ThunderClan?" I answered. She didn't get to answer because Mistystar began the Gathering.

"We have settled well by what was once known as The Main River. Minty is now known as Mintfur and has given birth to three healthy kits, Owlkit, Stonekit and Willowkit. Owlkit is to remember their fallen father, Hoot. Ocean has been named Greymist as well." Mistystar announced. "We also have a new apprentice medicine cat, Mothpaw, who is a great apprentice."

The other Clans cheered for the new kits, newly-renamed rogues, and for Mothpaw. I made sure I joined in.

Bramblestar took Mistystar's place, gazing around the rather small crowd of cats. His fur started to spike up in self-consciousness but he swallowed down his fear and continued the gathering.

"BloodClan's camp is being torn down while we've managed to make our self a camp in the meantime. We have new names: Lostface has changed her name back to Brightheart and a new warrior has been named, Bloodnose. We are very thankful for the amount of survivors we have." Bramblestar dipped his head as he finished. The Clans cheered the two newly named cats and died down as Onestar came forward.

"Not much to report from WindClan, only that Icefeather has learned a lot in two moons and is a great medicine cat in training and that Tess is now to be known as Owlwhisker," Onestar meowed, his strong voice echoing among the silent Clans. "Congrats," Cinderpelt purred, nudging me softly. I gave her a warm smile in return.

"BloodClan's Arena will be destroyed sooner or later and we've steered clear of it for our camp." The Clans cheered my name and Owlwhisker's for a few heartbeats as Blackstar took his place.

"We've settled well in the pines and we're at peace. Tabby changed her name to Tallpoppy, who I'm happy to say is now a great medicine cat. Timber is now Leaftail and Deathpaw has made it to become a warrior, named Deathmist." Blackstar meowed. The Clans yelled out their names for a few heartbeats as the leaders hopped down.

"Let us remember the fallen always." Mistystar called out.

Without even thinking the thought over, I leaped up as cats mingled with one another for a few heartbeats. I trotted through the small crowd of Clan cats until I came to Deathmist and Thornclaw. Deathmist looked over at me then said his farewells to Thornclaw.

Thornclaw left to go with ThunderClan so I was stuck with Deathmist. *Oh great StarClan, what have I gotten myself into?* I thought with widening eyes.

"Hello, Icefeather." My brother murmured with questioning eyes. I dipped my head, "Hello."

An awkward tension surrounded the two of us and I decided to call it off and give up. "Yeah so... I totally thought you were someone else. But er... Congrats with the cool name." I stammered, backing away slowly. He dipped his head, "Congrats with the responsibility. See you at the next Gathering."

I hurried away to find my small Clan, my tail fluffed up in tension and awkwardness. Onestar gave me a look of amusement, his eyes glittering. "How'd *that* go?" He purred. I narrowed my eyes at him and sighed. "Still awkward." He dipped his head and led the four of us toward our unfinished home.

Times may have been rough as a kit and an apprentice, but it got better. I'm glad I stayed strong, or WindClan would be without a medicine cat.

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A/N-

Yeah so this story came to an end. I hope you guys enjoyed and thanks for all the votes and comments *.* Very noice C,:

P_A83 out C:

Fire Will Set Them Free

Four seasons have passed and it sure hasn't been four quick and easy seasons. With *very* few warriors I had to pitch in on hunting and border patrolling when I went out for herbs. We had so much territory for such a small and weak Clan. Not for long though, Heathertail - once Heatherpaw - was expecting kits. Her mate was unknown but I suspected it to be from ThunderClan.

Onestar hadn't seemed to mind, despite he was her father. He was too caught up in the fact she was bringing kits into the Clan. Coldfoot - once Coldpaw - was a splendid warrior. He worked hard to keep the Clan fed and his loyalty and commitment glowed in his blue eyes.

No Clan had bothered us in those four seasons, to my relief. If ThunderClan or RiverClan had given us trouble, especially through leaf-bare, I wouldn't have let Onestar battle them. We couldn't afford anyone dying.

And on top of that, the Arena was still there in plain sight. It's a terrifying memory that won't diminish. I wished it could just... be gone like we'd hoped; then we could set the fallen free, but no such luck.

We had destroyed any water supply in the Arena with boulders and clay so no prey would want to live there, but it didn't seem to work as well as Onestar had expected. Most of the prey was out of it by now, though.

Sighing, I let the memories of the past four seasons drift me to sleep.
***
I opened my eyes to flames. Fire crackled around me, a circle of orange licking flames threatening to burn me. They were so tall, I couldn't even see over them.

Thank you. Thank you. Whispers from unknown cats filled my ears,

making them ring. I squeezed my eyes shut as the ringing continued, painfully drowning out the crackling sound of the fire. *Fire will set them free... Fire will burn their prison and their painful memories will let them be.* The voices chanted. Over and over, over and over... The world around me eventually began to spin and swirl until I found myself awake in the medicine den.

I tore out of the medicine cat den so fast I scared myself. *Is WindClan okay? Is there a fire?* I asked myself, tripping over my paws as I exited the den. No one was outside; the moon was going down now but the stars were still shining. Shining like ice shards in a sea of black. What was StarClan trying to tell me? Was this about the Arena and the spirits who were trapped?

I hurried into Onestar's den and lied to him, telling him I couldn't sleep and was in need of herbs. Drowsily, the leader mumbled, "Okay," and rolled back over to go to sleep. Relieved he didn't seem suspicious, I raced out of camp and looked to the sky.

"StarClan... how do I set them free? Give me answers so we can let the past be in the past!" I whispered to the clear sky. As if on cue, a strong wind blew my fur the opposite way, blowing towards Twolegplace that was downhill. "Twolegplace?" I murmured. A calm breeze whisked through my fur. Taking that as a yes, I dashed as fast as I could until I came to the Twolegplace.

This way. This way. Voices whispered. I wasn't sure who or what said it or where they were, but I didn't care. I followed the voices until they seemed to be right in front of me. My fur pricked up in hostility as Twoleg voices echoed through the silent night. Through wide eyes, I watched them go inside, leaving an unattended glowing orange fire.

Their nests' entrance closed quietly and - as much as my head told me not to - I ducked under the fence and stalked toward the fire. As I neared it, the heat seared my face, sending a shiver down my spine as the warmth comforted my cool pelt. Different shades of grey stone made a hollow circle around the fire. It crackled and danced as I stared mindlessly at it. *Hurry. Get wood.* The voices gasped. Gulping, I unlocked my gaze from the glowing ball of fire and backed away.

I scanned the territory with my heart pounding in fear and anxiousness. A pile of flat wood and sticks sat near the Twolegs nest. My heart lurched as my paws automatically clawed at the ground to hurry my way toward it. *You'll be free soon, Feathertail...* I thought as I grabbed a thin, long stick that was closest to me when I halted.

Turning tail, I fled to the fire yet again. It was dying down now, making it easier to get to the red not coals at the bottom. Hot flames threatened to melt my eyeballs and burn my whiskers off but I kept the stick in the fire until it lit.

My instincts told me to drop the stick and bolt, but I held it tight in my grasp as I trotted to the fence. I hopped over and trotted quickly toward the Arena. A few times I had to drop it and blow on it to keep the flames lit, stomping on the burning wood that fell.

I came to the edge of the Arena, boulders lining it. I hopped up and over the boulders and slid down the steep hill.

I set down the stick, laying it into a dry patch of grass and heather, and blew gently on it. Greenleaf had been a dry season and I was happy about it for that reason and that reason only. *Thank you, Icefeather.* A toms voice whispered. *Feathertail, too, will rest in peace now, thanks to you.* My heart skipped a beat and as I whipped around, I met eyes with the many sparkling, transparent spirits.

Hurry. Another tom growled. I nodded and raced up the steep hill, climbing the rocks we kicked in. The fire ate the grass as I climbed, spreading into the trees and other parts of the Arena. One of the big boulders that lined the Arena stood in my way, but I managed to leap over it from the adrenaline.

I looked over my shoulder to see flames everywhere. Orange flames were quickly eating away at the dry grass. "Now you can rest in peace... All of you," I murmured, feeling the weight fly off my shoulders.

"So can you." A shiver ran down my spine as Feathertail's voice hit my ears. And from those three words, I knew she was truly set free.

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Thanks everyone for the votes and support! This was just an extra chapter I thought of. Hope you liked!
P_A83 out!